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L E T T E R S
FROM THE
DUCHESS DE CRUI AND OTHERS,
ON
SUBJECTS MORAL AND ENTERTAINING,
WHEREIN THE
CHARACTER OF THE FEMALE SEX,
WITH
Their RANK, IMPORTANCE, and CONSEQUENCE,
IS STATED,
AND
Their RELATIVE DUTIES in LIFE are enforced.

By A L A D Y.

V O L. I.

L O N D O N,

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MDCCLXXVI.

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LETTERS

FROM THE

MICHAEL CRUISE AND OTHERS

SUBJECTS OF THE CRUISE

OF THE U.S.S. ALBATROSS

J. J. Banks



VOLUME

OF THE

PROCEEDINGS OF THE

TO THE
QUEEN.

M A D A M,

THE world may condemn my performance, but it must applaud my choice in this address. Although it may be easy to baffle, or evade the force of my written arguments, respecting the eminent qualifications of women, yet the fact will remain indisputable, when they contemplate those of your Majesty.

I am perfectly sensible of the necessity of making an apology to your
Majesty

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Majesty for this presumption; but, since I am unable to acquit myself as I wish, I intreat from your goodness that *indulgence*, which I cannot expect from your *justice*; and that you will be graciously pleased to accept this, my first performance, which is most humbly offered, by

Your Majesty's most devoted,

most obedient, and

most humble servant,

THE AUTHOR.

TO THE
P U B L I C.

THESE Letters stand so much in need of an apology, that the author assures her readers, they would not have been troubled with them upon any consideration of her own. They were written in her nursery, surrounded by her children, for whose use only they were originally intended. Her friends wished her to commit them to the press; but the dread of such an undertaking, the knowledge of the world, and of herself, prevented her compliance, till, being further importuned, she acquiesced, with this difference, that she has given them another dress, because few books are read but romances, by the juvenile part of mankind, who are too apt to neglect religious and

and moral instructions, if they do not appear in the alluring garb of amusement.

The author conceals her name, being diffident of the success of her work, not because she knows the gay world regard solid endowments as ridiculous : persons of understanding acknowledge that the improvement of their own minds, and those of others, is a laudable pursuit ; the writer of these letters is only afraid, her fate may be like that of Icarus, who, contemning admonition, flew too near the sun, dissolved the wax by which his wings were affixed, and perished by his presumption. She writes not for emolument, and shall at all events be satisfied in the integrity of her intentions.

The author has ever lamented her sex's being condemned to ignorance, or prevented from exercising their noblest
mental

P R E F A C E.

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mental faculties. She has, therefore, endeavoured to make them conscious of their capacity for attaining any knowledge to which they may aspire. It cannot be unattended with advantage, to open our minds to the accession of new ideas and to habituate ourselves to examine, to compare, to reflect, and to distinguish; in order to enlarge the sphere of our knowledge, and enoble our intellects. Is it not then to be regretted that women in general content themselves with frivolous pursuits ?

She has nothing to add, but that she has avoided letting fall any thing that has a tendency to mislead the understanding, or to blemish the morals; that she has not introduced any fictitious virtues; offered no extenuation for vice, as if it were excusable from habit, custom, or constitution.

tution. In short, nothing that may corrupt under the disguise of informing. It is probable the reader may see her thoughts are such as naturally arose from a knowledge of the world; and, therefore, before he concludes she is mistaken, hopes he will have recourse to the same school, and try her not by *opinion*, but *experience*; not by *logic*, but by *life*.



S. J. Banks 1776.

L E T T E R I.

From the Duchefs de CRUI; to Mrs.
PIERPONT, at Liege.

Brussels.

DEAR MADAM,

YOU have done me great honour
in calling upon me to give you
my opinion on subjects, the discussion
of which there is no person among my
female acquaintance so equal to as your-
self. To whom, indeed, I owe many of
the observations, which I shall hazard in
my future correspondence. The num-
berless Essays, and Books, which have
been written concerning our sex, and by
some of themselves, have afforded a suf-

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ficient

ficient proof of the excellency of their talents, the liveliness of their imaginations, the quickness of their parts, and the justness of their sentiments; yet your partiality prevails so far as to insist on my taking up the pen. La Bruyere declares, "that we are come into the world too late to produce any thing new; that nature and life are pre-occupied; and that description and sentiment have been exhausted." — I must confess, however, that I cannot subscribe to such opinions. Science is (from the observations I have made) in a continued progression; and it is even our fault, if we are not wiser than our forefathers, or indeed, if we are not wiser this year than we were the last.

Flattered as I am, by your desire, I shall give you a proof of my ready obedience by immediately entering on the
task,

LETTER I.

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task, and pursuing it with the most unremitted attention as far as time will permit me, or my observation, information, or abilities extend. But you must not call me a plagiarist, for sometimes having recourse to my common place-book, and for taking the freedom of using such sentiments as will tend to illustrate my ideas; from whatever author I may have borrowed them, I shall give their names, when I recollect them: but to trace the origin of my ideas, would be an endless task, and would be a history of itself; it would be no unentertaining, no unuseful enquiry to examine the progress of our minds, and to mark by what degrees, or through what means, we arrive at the different stages of truth and error. But this is no part of your task to *me*, and I willingly resign it to a better pen. I have had so many proofs of your

candour on other occasions, that I need not desire you to over-look the inaccuracies that may appear in my style or method. All I shall aim at, is to be understood: and if you express your desire that I should proceed, I shall be justified to myself in continuing my reveries.

On the contrary, I shall as readily obey your commands in laying down my pen, as in taking it up. *Escape*, not *victory*, is all I contend for: and I faithfully promise, that, in my behaviour on the occasion, I shall not imitate the *archbishop* with *Gil Blas*, being very sensible it requires no *Aristarchus* to discover the imperfections of my pen. You have desired me particularly to acquaint you what my opinion is, in regard to a great many subjects relative to our sex, and the source from whence arises some of our principal defects; and urge your young ladies

ladies partiality for my sentiments, which you say will have great weight with them.—This induces me to communicate to you my *family narrative*, which consists of a number of letters written by respectable characters in our family —*their* sentiments will supply the defects of *mine*; and will animate me so far as to enable me to fill up the chasms in their correspondence, and to render the story complete and interesting to my young friends—This I hope will relieve me from writing, on those subjects you desired, as you will find in these letters, observations on the various situations and occurrences in life.

The trifles I sent your daughters, I know you will pardon, as they are, at least, a proof of my affection and good wishes.

I am ever, my dear Madam,

most affectionately yours,

ELIZA DE CRUI.

L E T T E R II.

From the Duchess de CRUI, to Mrs.
PIERPONT, at Leige.

THE Earl of F——, at the age of sixteen, by the death of his father, found himself possessed of a clear estate of five thousand pounds a year, besides a large sum of money in the funds. His father had been as avaricious as wealthy, and denied himself almost every thing which makes the life of the rich superior to that of the poor; he had no idea of pleasure, but that of possessing what he could not enjoy, which, you will allow, is a kind of poverty but little different from real want. The hand that *cannot* touch it, and the heart which *will not*, are hardly distinguishable in their effects.

Although

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Although this unhappy disposition had enriched his son; yet his lordship, and his two sisters, were, in consequence of it, totally deficient in those accomplishments suitable to their birth, nay, were even defective in the most common accomplishments of youth. To save a few pounds in wages, the children of the late Earl of F—— had been put under the care of ignorant low-bred people, absolutely unqualified for so great a trust. His amiable countess (like virtue) never had the esteem she merited from him—Her temper was all serenity; having no pleasure in the thoughts of ambition, she was content to conform to her lord's retired way of living: but, when she saw his parsimony extended to her children, she ventured, for the first time, to expostulate with him on that subject; and when she found her intreaties inef-

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fectual,

8 L E T T E R I I.

fectual, the shock was too great for her tender spirits; she fell into a deep melancholy, and a consumption soon terminated her life. By her death, her son and daughters were cut off from the only resource they had for improvement—Thus did the late earl exemplify in himself the truth of Mr. Pope's observation, That

“ One master passion in the breast,
“ Like Aaron's serpent, swallows all the rest.”

Lord F——, being then young, ignorant, and rich, is it at all to be wondered at, that his house became a scene of debauchery, and he a *prey*, to those harpies, who never fail to hover over young men of large fortune?—“ It was well, that his fortune was large; for he was in danger of Actæon's fate, the being eat up by his own hounds.” Luckily for his lordship, he was rescued from his extravagancies by a very extraordinary event.

One

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One of his intimate friends was taken up for a high-way robbery, dragged from his presence by the officers of justice, and afterwards condemned and executed. This impressed his young mind with horror; he became sensible of the dissoluteness of his associates, most of whom had been introduced to him by Mr. Plot, an attorney in the neighbourhood. It had been this man's interest to divert the mind of Lord F——, and disengage him from his relations, that he might have the better opportunity to manage his fortune for *himself*.

Sir James Bruce, Lord F——'s uncle, took occasion at this time to repeat his admonitions, which had been before disregarded, but were now joyfully attended to: age may preach, youth must purchase its own experience. The young earl, humbled by the discovery of the insufficiency

TO LETTER II.

sufficiency of his own judgment, placed himself entirely under the direction of his uncle. Sir James prevailed on Mr. Lewis, a clergyman of great worth, to undertake the difficult task of withdrawing him from his vices, and to insinuate such instruction into him, as his mind should be found capable of receiving. Mr. Lewis possessed an estate of eight hundred a year, and left a very good living to accompany Lord F——, at Sir James Bruce's desire, having long had an intimate friendship with him. He was greatly beloved in his parish, and though a man of profound erudition, entertained his audience only with plain and intelligent discourses, as he never meant to *dazzle*, but *lead* the blind. *Preaching* and *practising* require different talents, which, when united in the same person, constitute the true christian : as *wit*
and

L E T T E R II. 11

and *judgment*, going together, constitute a true genius.

Mr. Lewis knew not the mistakes of the head, or heart, but from the experience of others: and, as it was said of Coriolanus, he had a natural aversion to vice. He smoothed (to his parishioners) the rugged path of sickness, by the soothing suggestions of hope for better hours, and a happier state hereafter, and even talked away the stings of death from minds which had not been much distracted by great crimes: he frequently restored the rosy hue of health to the livid cheek, and fire to the lifeless eye of sickening beauty, by his medicinal applications. By his means the temple of Janus was shut, and peace dwelt amongst the inhabitants of his cure. Of so much advantage is one good man to those over whom he is placed! As the
sun

sun gives colours to all the objects of the earth, so does a true divine impart happiness and character to all those on whom he shines superior. Philosophy, which in the minds of so many others produces a singular mixture of truth and illusion, was formed in his mind, by reflection and experience, into a system of ideas equally simple, useful, and practicable: a system which seemed to come nearer to truth than any other which ennobled human nature, without puffing it up; and opened its views into better worlds, without totally abstracting it from this, or making it useless in its present state.

Mr. Lewis was not subject to casualties, for fortune hath nothing to do with the mind. He lived subject neither to time nor his frailties; the servant of virtue, and by virtue the friend of the Highest.

He had been repeatedly solicited some months before, by the friends of the Duke of M——, to attend him abroad; but had declined it, as he could not be induced to it by any pecuniary reward.—As a change of place was judged necessary to cut off all Lord F——'s former connections, they set out for a villa in Wales, which had been engaged for that purpose. It was a place formed by nature for all kinds of country sports, as Mr. Lewis knew the necessity of relieving a studious application with intervals of relaxation; by which the health is preserved, without which it is impossible to render our virtues or actions useful to ourselves or society.

Whatever advantage we snatch beyond the certain portion granted us by nature, is like money spent before it is due, which at the time of regular payment will

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will be missed and regretted. Mr. Lewis also procured for the companion of Lord F——, a young gentleman of distinguished abilities, who assisted him in *stealing instruction on him*, rooting out his errors, and strengthening his every propensity to truth, order, and literary improvement.

I am ever, dear Madam,

Your affectionate

humble servant,

ELIZA DE CRUI.

L E T T E R I I I .

From the Same to the Same.

DEAR MADAM,

AT the time Sir James Bruce had so judiciously disposed of Lord F——, he sent his two sisters to Lady Filmer, who had obligingly consented to take the charge of them. As this Lady will make no inconsiderable figure in the following pages, it is necessary I should delineate her character to you. She had no pretensions to beauty, being in her thirty-sixth year; however, she had a tall agreeable person, a pleasing countenance, a noble air, and was one of the most accomplished of her sex. Lady Filmer was a faithful wife, an affectionate mother, and a sincere friend. She had, it is true, a particular veneration
for

for people of birth, but it never made her overlook the meanest beggar; nor did her love of the sciences prevent her from the strictest attention to her œconomical arrangements.

She thought that a neglect of a single duty endangers the infringement of the whole: that a well-stated *rule* is like the *line*; when that is once past, we are under another hemisphere; so the first straying from a rule, is a step towards making that which was before a virtue, to change its nature, and grow either into a vice, or an impertinence.

“ When we once o’er-pass the bounds of right,

“ With every sin we find its satellite :

“ One evil act pursued by others still,

“ As round the sun the rolling planets wheel.” *

Lady Filmer considered profusion and parsimony as two extremes, equally to

* Poems by a person condemned to be transported to the plantations,

be

be avoided, and generosity as the happy medium betwixt them. She had the most interested heart that ever beat in a female bosom, and could not behold even those who deserved it in pain, without "feeling herself the most exquisite anguish of heart."

Though she was sensible of injuries, she never resented them; but won the hearts of those who are charmed with the softer studies of humanity.

She wisely considered that *home* is the female theatre for action; that it is there alone we can ascertain its merit. Her house resembled the internal mechanism of the animal body, in which every thing is employed in continual labour, without our being sensible of any motion, while the external parts are at rest. She held in utter contempt the duties im-

posed on us by fashion, which are innumerable ; because those who would fulfil them could not have half an hour to spare for books, a husband, or a friend ; as from women of fashion, the politeness of the age requires no other occupation than that of pleasure, no other knowledge than that of the world, no other duty than that of *not* living in open defiance to morality. She pitied those fine ladies, who are constantly governed by their love and their aversion ; and who have no command of their passions : whose wisdom and virtue are inferior to their beauty—Their charms, though the gift of Heaven, become equally fatal to themselves as to their admirers : their lives are continually perplexed between the desire of pleasing, and the pain of being neglected : the wildest passion of their lovers exposes them less than their
own

own natural inconstancy and vanity: add to this, that if their good nature exceeds their pride, they are doubly miserable, as their attractions bring upon them solicitations they want the power to resist, which makes them slaves to the tyranny and caprices of love. Such were the sentiments of Lady Filmer; but at the same time she thought, that, as members of society, we ought not only to cultivate the duties which may render us useful to others, but also the agreeable arts which afford pleasure to those with whom we converse. Her maxim was, we owe something to society, but more to ourselves, a few hours to folly, and the rest to reason. Her opinion was, that none spend their time properly, who do not live by some rule, who do not appropriate the hours, as near as may be, to particular purposes and employments.

ments. She was parsimonious in nothing but her time, of which she made the best improvement, with the least loss of any person I ever was acquainted with ; and always urged, that whoever does not attempt perfection, will sink far below mediocrity. She had two faults, as shades to these perfections ; the first of these would have been insupportable in two thirds of her sex : she was apt in company to engross the conversation, and to deliver her sentiments in too peremptory and decisive a manner on the subject debated : she happened, indeed, to be generally in the right, but a failing of this kind, though it may be *borne*, yet cannot be *defended*. Yet surely it is impossible to have superior talents to the vulgar, without feeling our superiority ; and not very easy to conceal it. Lady Filmer's other foible, was too high an idea of the
pre-

prerogatives of her own sex, and a too great partiality in favour of people of rank, as has been before observed. She maintained that there is something in blood in the human creature, as well as the ignobler animals! This was a favourite subject with her Ladyship; which she carried sometimes too far, to the discomposure of Sir John, her husband, who, although a *peer's* brother, had accumulated a large fortune by trade; and in consequence of many transactions he had with people of rank, held them, in general, in little esteem. Sir John used frequently to reason with Lady Filmer on this subject, and said, "Titles do not impose on me, I regard the *statue* not its *pedestal*: men in this age, either inherit titles from their worthy ancestors, purchase them, or receive them as *rattles*, to *still ambition*. Birth,

worthily lived up to, is virtue. We cannot command bright talents, and extensive capacities, but we may make those we have, useful to ourselves and others : we cannot command the gifts of fortune, or titles, but we may deserve them : we cannot all be *great*, but every body may be *good*. I respect the circumstance of birth, only as it is an additional motive to virtue ; but in fact, it is only the gift of chance, often unnecessary to our happiness : I am far from despising those who have not this advantage. In the general scale of beings, the lowest is as useful, and as much a link of the great chain, as the highest : nothing is mean in my eyes but vice. Let us always remember, that true greatness of mind, consists in a contempt of all those customs
• and

and opinions not founded on reason and common sense. Dean Swift, says, "*That he who makes a pile of grass or corn grow where it did not grow before, is a greater man than Julius Cæsar.*" If true greatness consists in being rather useful to society than making a shining figure in it; his remark is certainly just. As merit can render those illustrious who are but of mean extraction, vice will make those infamous that are of the best families. The counsel of St. Jerome to Celantia, is worthy of the observation of your whole sex: "We ought, says he, to esteem that nobility, which pleaseth God; which depends upon ourselves, and is inseparable from virtue. There are three sorts of nobility, divine, worldly, and moral: the divine depends upon the power of God, the worldly upon the greatness of our birth, the moral upon the liberty of

our mind ; if we consider well the importance of the first, we shall set less value upon the second, and render ourselves more capable of the third." This was the only subject on which Sir John and Lady Filmer disagreed : he always insisted on it with warmth, as he justly considered it as almost her only foible. Sir John was master of every subject, had thought *much*, and had contemplated every subject deserving attention with an accuracy, a taste, and an elegance, peculiar to men who have improved their minds by observations on real life, a sober exercise of the understanding, and a judicious course of study. His conversation was consequently highly entertaining ; he had a great share of good sense, and his disposition was full of sweetness and benevolence ; he had the genuine art of pleasing to perfection, for
he

he made those with whom he conversed pleased with themselves, and filled them with good-humour, proceeding from self-complacency: through his eyes shot forth the living emanations of a good heart, and the pure ray of intellect; chearfulness glowed on his countenance and promised a pleasing reception, to the stranger, who, after spending a whole day in his family, was apt to mistake the house for his own. Every one there might do as they pleased; and when he made entertainments, his friends told him they were not only pleased while they were enjoying them, but also upon recollection. At eight in the morning, and nine at night, Sir John and Lady Filmer, always themselves, retired to their chapel, where their domestic chaplain read prayers. Is it not reasonable to suppose, that the regular and
stated

stated worship of *God* in a family, must have a happy influence on the conduct and tempers of those who attend it? A continual sense of our dependence is thereby kept up: we are often put in mind of what we owe the divine goodness, and the frequent acknowledgments of our offences should make us ashamed to repeat them. How can we love God if we never hear him mentioned in a becoming manner? It absolutely requires a greater portion of grace than is given to every one. Sir John had a daughter by a former marriage (your humble servant); who being consigned by my mistaken mother, on her death-bed, to the care of her *sister*; by this means, I am afraid, I have made a very different figure in life, from what it is probable I might have done, had I been under the direction of Lady Filmer. The
only

only child Sir *John* had by my lady was a son, who was abroad at the period above mentioned, when the Lady F—— came to Filmer-Place. I am almost afraid, my dear Mrs. Pierpont, that I have fatigued you with my description of this worthy pair. But I must yet acquaint you, that as Sir John possessed a very large estate, and only two children, he had a school erected for the instruction of youth—In limiting the numbers to twenty of each sex, he did violence to his own benevolence; but wisely judged, that his heirs, from difference of circumstances, might not be in the same situation with himself, and that withdrawing charity must render a man obnoxious; since, when any charity has been long established, they who reap the advantage of it are apt to plead prescription. Do you not think, my dear Mrs. Pierpont, that the charity which
pro-

provides for the *morals*, as well as the *bodily wants* of the poor, gives a double benefit to the *public*, as it adds to the number of the *hopeful* what it takes from that of the *profligate*.

Sir John, and Lady Filmer, had formerly been very intimate with Sir James, and Lady Bruce : the latter's bad health had prevented their meeting for ten years past ; as Sir James Bruce had never left my lady (but when business called him) during all that time, in which she had been afflicted with a cancer in her breast.

As the earl of F—— had lived constantly in retirement, Lady Filmer was totally unacquainted with the history of their family ; and as she had no daughter of her own, she accepted Sir James Bruce's offer of taking the Lady F——s under her protection. As Sir John had told her they were very handsome, in justice to her
favour-

L E T T E R III. 29

favourite hypothesis, she could not doubt of their knowledge, politeness, and intellectual accomplishments being agreeable to their high descent. Sir John was determined to prove to her, in these young ladies, the futility of her reasoning on this point; and the better to enjoy her surprize, concealed from her a letter he had received from Sir James Bruce, and which you will find here inclosed. When the young ladies arrived, figure to yourself her surprize, when instead of two elegantly polite and accomplished young ladies of fashion, she beheld two country rustics, awkward in their manner, and scarcely intelligible, from their provincial dialect! It is to be observed, that the people of fashion in Scotland, speak with great propriety; but these young ladies, as has already been observed, had never associated with any people but servants.

Lady Filmer's partiality still prevailing, she recollected that the use of language is only to convey our ideas to one another; and as every country has its own peculiar dialect, to speak the purest is only a kind of local merit. A Greek philosopher, justly commended for the sweetness of his style, was known to be a stranger by a fruit-woman at Athens. She still flattered herself, that they had well-informed understandings, and imputed their awkwardness to country education, and too close application. The second day after dinner, she put Milton's *Paradise Lost* into the hands of Lady Sophia, (the eldest of the young ladies, being then seventeen years old) requesting the favour she would read aloud a part she pointed out. This Lady Filmer thought would afford her an opportunity of judging of her abilities in reading, and

as

as it was a passage with which she was perfectly acquainted, she could the better understand her pronunciation. Lady Sophia excused herself by saying, "*Indeed she could not read.*" "It is indeed, my dear, replied Lady Filmer, a difficult matter to read well: sweetness of voice, clearness and delicacy of pronunciation, propriety of accent, spirit, ease, and harmony, are not alone sufficient: we require besides, a complete and perfect imitation, an expression which gives to each part of the work, to each period, and to each verse, the life and the pathos it ought to have. In a word, my dear Lady Sophia, the manner of reading should be such, as the ear should supply the place of all other senses: but be not discouraged, I make not doubt but you will answer this description." This long harangue was as unintelligible to

to Lady Sophia, as an Etruscan inscription is to our literari. She paused, blushed, and said, "I know not what your Ladyship means." Lady Filmet was too much astonished to speak; she stood like Atlas, turned into stone by the petrifying virtue of Medusa's head.

Sir John enjoyed her embarrassment, and observed, smiling, that he had always imagined that a Lord's daughter could read, and do every thing else by intuition. "From what I know of the matter, added he, (pardon me young ladies) it is the only way you could know any thing." He then presented my lady the inclosed letter, which, when she had read, she said, the young Lady's want of information was a great reproach to nobility; and proposed to Sir John, to procure them private instruction before they should be sent to school, that their extreme

treme ignorance might not be exposed. To this Sir John willingly agreed, and they carried them to their estate in Kent, with proper instructors.

Farewell, my dear Mrs. Pierpont. Mr. Pope says, " That the letters of friends are no worse for being fit for none else to read ; " and the certainty that none else will read my letters but you and your family, makes me easy in that respect.

I ever am

most faithfully

Yours,

ELIZA DE CRUI.

L E T T E R IV.

Sir JAMES BRUCE to Sir JOHN FILMER.

DEAR SIR,

THE melancholy situation of my family has prevented me, for some years past, from paying my respects to you, either personally or by writing. Your humanity would easily furnish an excuse for me, were you witness of the acute anguish of heart I daily undergo, in beholding the most amiable of her sex, suffer the most unremitted torments. Lady Bruce has had a cancer in her breast these ten years; her exemplary patience and resignation exceeds credibility.

I hope Lady Filmer is in perfect health. It is with great pleasure I hear
such

such agreeable accounts of Mr. Filmer from abroad; whom every body says is worthy of his parents. As it is so long since I had the honour of seeing you, it is necessary I should inform you of some circumstances relative to my family-connections, previous to a petition I shall take the liberty of presenting to Lady Filmer. About two years ago, the Earl of F——, my brother-in-law died, I believe I may safely add, *to the joy of that noble family*. This may be easily accounted for, when I tell you, that he had (once) a wife, children, and relations; but he had neither cares for their welfare, nor tears for their distress: he bore their afflictions with the most christian patience, and kissed the rod with which providence had chastised them; conforming precisely to that divine and Stoical precept

of Epictetus, “ If thy friend be in extremity, thou mayest then say, thou hast pity on him, but be sure not to feel any, because that is an infirmity beneath the dignity of man.” But Lord F—— carried this sentiment still further; in imitation of what we are told of a certain nation, he wept when any children were born to him, and laughed when they died. He was an ingrosser of corn, and used to contemplate, with more pleasure than any other painting in his house, a picture of Pharaoh’s dream of the seven lean kine that eat up all the fat ones. In short he distilled money from the tears of the poor, and grew fat upon their curses. If he ever repeated the Lord’s Prayer, of forgiving our debts, as we forgive our debtors, like a witch’s prayer, he always repeated it backwards. Leaving no will,
the

the young Earl, at the age of sixteen, who had never before been master of half a crown, found himself possessed of a large fortune, his two sisters being left entirely dependent on him. Upon this occasion I waited on my nephew; but found he had been prepossessed before my arrival, and taught to consider me as an impertinent censor, who would send him to school: so that all my arguments were of no effect; and what hurt me most, the girls seemed to have adopted the same ideas. I returned home, penetrated with real sorrow for irregularities occasioned by ignorance: the confusion of tongues must have been order and intelligence, compared to what passed in this mansion. I was obliged to consider him, at that time, as a person in the delirium of a fever, or one of those un-

fortunate madmen whom nature frequently presents to us, as mortifying spectacles of humanity. Advice given unasked is troublesome to the receiver, and consequently useless; but, before my departure, I thought it my duty to urge the necessity of his sisters going to town for their education: he answered that they had all been unhappy long enough, and that now they should make merry. Youth seldom looks beyond the present moment, and its views terminate in the object it enjoys. Lord F—— grew warm, and even insinuated to me, that he had been informed I was directed by my own views, in desiring to get the management of him and his fortune into my hands: I contented myself with saying unto him, “Young man, when you know me better, you will be convinced

vinced that whenever I pretend to give you advice, I should abhor myself if I did not wholly consider the good of the person to whom I gave it, or had a view to my own interest which might in the least affect them." A happy accident has restored him to reason: he is now abroad, with a gentleman of great worth and distinguished abilities, who has undertaken the very difficult task of forming his mind. My fears are, that like the snail, he will carry too much of home on his back, to make any progress in the knowledge of men and things! But, not to take up sorrow at interest, let us wait events, when nothing in our power can prevent them. His two sisters, he has submitted to my direction. The unhappy situation of my family precludes their coming to Bruce-Hill, if their

extreme ignorance did not render it necessary for them to go to London; where their education may be accelerated by masters we cannot command at York. Besides, shall I own to you, I am fearful of introducing Lady Sophia to my *innocent rustics*, being ignorant of what bad qualities she may have imbibed from her brother's associates. Lady Harriet is too young for me to form any idea of her character: she is at present naturally the echo of her sister.

In general, children do not resemble more in family features, than family habits; and I do assure you, family *minds* are as often transmitted as family *faces*. Ninety-nine times in a hundred, a character is formed from mere intuition, and holds its course according to the line it is either led or thrown into, in the first stage of the human journey.

Now, my dear friend, after telling you the state of our affairs: if Lady Filmer would condescend to take the direction of these *lasses*, and place them at a school, &c. she would confer a very high obligation on Lady Bruce, and myself. They are very *beautiful*, and no expence need be attended to, in the conduct of their affairs. A relation of their father's has importuned me for this trust, but I do not choose to confide in her. I must confess, at present, *they* are but badly qualified for doing honour to Lady Filmer's two favourite subjects, *female virtue*, and *exalted birth*: her Ladyship's letters to me on that subject, wrote fifteen years ago, I preserve as the deeds of my estate. But Lady Filmer's *conduct*, not her *writing*, made me a convert to her tenets.

May

May we not, my dear friend, from our experience, declare, that they who maintain that women have no virtue, have never associated but with the dregs of the sex, and are below the censure of the sensible and rational.

Lady Bruce desires her compliments to you, and joins with me in best respects to Lady Filmer : I remain, with great regard, dear Sir,

Your obedient,

humble Servant,

JAMES BRUCE.

LETTER V.

From Mrs. PIERPONT to the Ducheſs
DE CRUI, at Bruffels.

DEAR MADAM,

HOW much am I honoured and edified by your highneſs's kind condeſcenſion! Indeed, my dear Madam, words are wanting to expreſs the exalted idea we entertain of you: the delight and inſtruction conveyed in your letters, are very ſalutary to my young ones; they dwell with ſuch rapture on every ſentiment, that, I hope, it will become their own. How much do we admire Lady Filmer's character, which can only be equalled by your highneſs's candour, and humility. How defective do I find myſelf, when with you, or when I hear
of

of others. Lady Filmer's family arrangements I greatly approve; what a blessing it was for the Lady F——s to have such a monitress! Her school for the infant poor must have procured her the blessings of the neighbourhood. I am afraid I have but badly fulfilled the duties of beneficence, for want of knowledge: my views have hitherto been confined to that of relieving bodily distresses. These extend no further than to the good of the individual; education, on the contrary, is productive of infinite advantages, extending its influence to society, and may operate upon posterity to the end of the world. What a mistaken idea do the men form of a learned lady: the only fault which a woman, that has abilities and a fluency of words, is likely to fall into, is an impertinence or affectation

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LETTER V. 45

tion of distinction. Where talents are given, should we wish them either to be *uncultivated*, or *unacknowledged*? The part which we have to act in life is respectable, and nature has given us all the necessary requisites to perform it. Virtue, truth, and knowledge, are the only objects worthy of our being solicitous after; and these we have minds capable of reaching in the most perfect manner. In a word, we have no other certain means to secure happiness to ourselves, through life, but by a steady pursuit of virtue and prudence. I would not have my daughters pedantic, nor do I require them to be learned: their situations in life will probably be so obscure, that any affectation of distinction would be highly detrimental to them. An exalted situation in point of rank and fortune, can alone procure merit its eulogy,

gy, as the superiority precludes rivalry; for in equality of situations, extraordinary talents are, of themselves, sufficient provocation for hatred. I wish them only to receive such of the advantages of education, as may make them be considered as rational and valuable members of society: all that can be learned by women, without neglecting the useful knowledge of their sex, I would have them learn: this will show that they are good housewives of their time, and that they have not had a narrow or confined education: but I would not have them, for these, give up the more necessary, and therefore not meaner employments, which will qualify them to be useful and agreeable members of society, and good mistresses of a family. I breed up my girls frugally: they will not easily get husbands:

bands: men of great fortunes will look higher, men of small fortunes must look out to enlarge them, and men of genteel professions are justly afraid of every young woman whose birth and education are superior to her fortune: as luxury has placed every thing in the class of necessaries, the expences it occasions are with difficulty defrayed; consequently men's affections must be subordinate to their interest.

This subject often occurs to me, and gives me infinite uneasiness. A single woman is an undefended, unsupported creature; her early connections, year by year drop off, no new ones arise, and she remains solitary and unheeded, in a busy bustling world; perhaps soured too by her unconnected state. Yet the calamities of an unhappy wife are so much greater than can befall a single person, that

that the unmarried woman may find abundant arguments to be contented with her condition. I often likewise think, in regard to my son, that if a man happen to be poor, it is a disadvantage to have been born or bred a gentleman; because it is likely he may never be able to advance his fortunes: mean persons have many ways of raising themselves to opulence; because they will fawn, will flatter, and use all methods, however base and servile, for their own purposes. *Fruits must be planted: mushrooms spring of themselves.* I blame myself for my anxiety: is it not *God*, who governs the world, and permits some things, and directs the others as he pleases? And will he not reward *temporal sufferings*, innocently and piously supported, with eternal felicity? And has not Almighty God, placed certain intimations

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mations in the soul which assure it, that *however* agreeable the Deity may have rendered the present state, it is but a passage which, upon the easy terms of our acting properly to *him*, and to each *other*, will lead us gently along, till it terminate in eternity. I am ever your highness's

affectionate, obliged,

and sincere friend,

ANNA PIERPONT.

P. S. If it will not interrupt your highness's family-narrative, I should intreat a sight of (if in your possession) the letters Sir James Bruce mentions to have received from Lady Filmer.

L E T T E R VI.

From Mr. LEWIS, to Sir JAMES BRUCE.

DEAR SIR,

North Wales,

I Have the satisfaction to acquaint you that Lord F—— has exceeded every sanguine expectation I could have formed for him.—His diligence, his application, are beyond what you can conceive. You enquire of me by what methods I have accomplished this : as my plan has been very simple, it will be the easier explained. After an accurate, and close application to the developing his character, I found his heart *good*, and his passions *strong* : I have endeavoured to preserve him from their attendant evils : and formed great hopes from

L E T T E R VI. 51

from the native sweetness of his disposition, and the tenderness and attention I meant to exert, to divert and entertain him. I have been watchful over his conduct, while I affected to trust it entirely to himself; being very sensible that a youth of seventeen, who hath once tasted of guilty pleasures, will with great difficulty be restrained, or induced to regularity, or application. I seemed to indulge him, by contributing to his gratifications, in every thing I could approve of; and my attention in this particular confirmed my power. Innocent pleasures were the only means to create in him a disgust to the contrary. I have expressed always respect and esteem for him; judging it a good method to prevent ingenuous minds from such actions as are unworthy of them. By these means I have never reduced him to the temp-

tation of deceiving me, which would have rendered falsehood habitual to him; as at first a seeming necessity may force a young man to dissemble, although he has a natural aversion to it; but this aversion will wear off by degrees, dissimulation will become familiar; he will make a jest of it, and then *all is lost*. I have therefore been particularly careful to preserve the ingenuousness of his disposition; and I even led him to perceive, from my reserve, the fear I was under of drawing him into an occasion of speaking an untruth: this created in him a detestation of a vice into which an indiscreet severity hath plunged so many young people. Constraint gives rise to dissimulation, falsehood, and a meanness of spirit that excludes all hopes of reformation.

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Is not this (even at an earlier age) a much better manner of teaching youth, than severity? The soul readily inclines to virtue when it is pointed out with delicacy. I am convinced when man came from the hand of his Creator, he had the knowledge of truth and goodness. Sin darkened his knowledge, without being able entirely to extinguish those internal luminaries which had been lighted up by the hand of God. A man without motives for thinking wrong, will think right. A man feels many compunctions before he can reconcile himself to intemperance, and ungodliness: he is pleased with himself when he is virtuous: his natural ideas of truth determine and influence him, unless the prevalence of some passion obliges him to do violence to his natural intelligence. Doctor Young has a very just senti-

ment, in his Centaur: "We cannot think too highly of our *natures*, nor too meanly of *ourselves*." A bad opinion of human nature readily produces a selfish disposition, and renders the temper chearless and unsociable: if there be any method forcible enough to reclaim from wickedness, must it not be that exalted generosity, which returns good for evil: while severity, which is often revenge under the cloak of justice, confirms evil dispositions, by producing a hatred of mankind. Nature is said to abhor a vacuum: if Lord F——'s mind, from defects of education was formerly over-run with the vilest weeds; I have since discovered it to be a soil for great sentiments to take root, and flourish. Montaigne, upon the subject of children's education, blames the too great severity of parents, who often take
greater

greater care to be *feared* than *loved*. He relates, that a person of distinction (a friend of his) who had lost his only son, a youth of great hopes in the army, in discoursing with him on the affliction such a loss must be, said “ My greatest grief is, that having brought up my son with too much severity, he did not know the tenderness I had for him : and, alas ! he died without being sensible how much I loved him.” Is not this a good lesson to parents ? Severity is only useful to remedy those evils which our own negligence creates ; there is no occasion for it in a system of education, in which we should so continually watch over the obscure rise of evil habits, that by leaving no room for nature to take a wrong bias, we may render it unnecessary to employ any harshness to correct. A great man, who has been persecuted by a world he has

enlightened, has sufficiently detailed the principal maxims of education. This chiefly consists in presenting to the mind a small number of select objects; in substituting the originals for the copies, both of physical and moral phænomena, in leading the pupil to virtue by the easy road of sentiment, and with-holding him from evil by the infallible power of necessary inconveniencies, rather than by command, which only obtains a counterfeit and momentary obedience. This corresponds entirely with my opinion, and is what I would recommend for youth. From the intenseness of Lord F——'s feelings, on the recollection of his past errors, I am convinced, if any other plan had been pursued with him, that by this time he would have been good for nothing. I have rarely known a man make a good figure in life after
he

he has been publicly disgraced : shame is a powerful restraint, and when men have got over it, they generally proceed from bad to worse.

This is often seen in the army, where it is observed, the minds of men who have been often punished become quite insensible.

The being dissatisfied with ourselves, is a sentiment too painful for the soul to be able to endure. To alleviate my Lord's uneasiness, I have endeavoured to put him in credit with himself : the tender and insinuating air with which I have always addressed him, has contributed to the confidence he has placed in me : the transition from respect to affection is no easy step, especially with young people, who seldom love what they have been accustomed to fear. Real tenderness and true friendship are never
impe-

imperious; they may propose their wishes, but they exact nothing.

There are a number of people valuable for their sincerity, whom, though we cannot forbear respecting, we can never be brought to love: on reflection we know they deserve our love, and yet how frequently do we find ourselves inclined to hate them! their frankness is often so uncivil, that it offends and disgusts us: they will give us their advice, which we approve of, and yet find in ourselves a reluctance to follow it. Why is this? It is, because they want that address and delicacy, which is requisite to endear us to their counsel. In addressing us, they seem to direct us, and this offends our pride. Sentible of this, I have endeavoured to cloath my instruction in all the charms of sensibility: he has a feeling heart, we
reject

reject not the lesson, which insinuates itself through our affections. I have remonstrated to his lordship, that as soon as we are conscious of our errors, remorse should cease: as its continuance would only deprive us of the power of correcting our faults, and would therefore be as prejudicial, as too great a degree of timidity, which only serves to expose us more certainly to the danger we should endeavour to avoid by prudence, or oppose with resolution. Confucius has well observed, “ That virtue does not consist in never erring, which is impossible, but in recovering from error as fast as possible.” In short, my dear Sir, I have endeavoured, and I hope not without success, to steal instruction on him, as it were without imposing it; otherwise he would have regarded my counsels as lessons, and lessons are ever dis-

displeasing. I have strenuously urged to him, the necessity of a due regard to religion, honour, and probity. That he should learn as much of the sciences as are necessary for his situation: that he should be virtuous and accomplished, a christian, and a man of courage. As he had so much to acquire (exclusive of what he was to be weaned from), I have not urged the necessity of his learning Latin. He is now, however, almost master of the French and Italian Languages. It is observed in the natural world, no change is instantaneous, but all its vicissitudes are gradual and slow. The motions of intellect proceed in the like imperceptible progression, and proper degrees of transition from one study to another, are therefore necessary: I have not suffered his studies to engross him too much, but relieved them by fre.

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frequent intermissions. A practice consistent with the most exemplary diligence, and which he who omits will find at last, that, like money, time may be lost by unseasonable avarice. As I have often observed that it is a common defect in the education of persons of distinction, that they cannot write correctly. I have taken particular care of him in this respect: though it may be pardoned to be ignorant of the sciences, it is inexcusable for a man, not to make himself understood in the common occurrences of life. The books we have read, are those of morality, where the human passions are described, their conduct regulated, the beauties of virtue displayed, and the advantages of a regular life set forth—In short, books, whose subjects recommend the real happiness of mankind, according to the poet:

Virtue, and that part of philosophy
Will I apply, that treats of happiness
By virtue specially to be atchieved.

My Lord has also studied geometry: Mr. Locke, you know, recommends it even to those who have no design of being geometricians; and he gives a reason for it, that may be applied to the present case. "Such persons, said he, may forget every problem that has been proposed, and every solution that they or others have given; but the habit of pursuing long trains of ideas will remain with them, and they will pierce through the mazes of sophism, and discover a latent truth, where persons who have not this habit will not find it." My humble efforts have been crowned with so much success, that I despair not, on my return, of producing a young nobleman who will do honour to his country.

I think

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I think it was observed of the ancient schools of declamation, that the more diligently they were frequented, the more was the student disqualified for the world: because he found nothing there, which he should ever meet in another place. My Lord lies not (at least) under this disadvantage; and I know not, upon the whole, if his deficiencies in some points of literature may not be an advantage to him; for to pass through the education in vogue, without contracting vices, and those gross ones too, there must be a rich fund of natural goodness, the most happy dispositions, an absolute bias to virtue, and a distinguished complexion of soul. It is plain a knowledge of the world, is the most important study for those who are to live in it, and who would wish to act their part with dignity and propriety. It is with:

with pleasure to be observed, that men begin to be weary of theories, which lead to no useful consequence; and have no foundation, but in the imagination of ingenious men. The learned rubbish, under which science has been long choaked up, for the meanest purposes, is, in some measure, removed. The greatest difficulty I found I had to oppose, was a habit his Lordship had contracted of acting upon the impulse of the minute. I represented to him, that the man who weakly yields to first impressions, becomes successively the sport of his own passions; that the only remedy against this, is to form solid principles of truth and wisdom; which will always balance the irregular biases of the heart. As it is in this principally that probity consists: that a man, though to all appearance a
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man of honour, yet, if he acts not upon a well settled principle, is always to be mistrusted, for sooner or later he becomes the dupe of his own heart. The young clergyman, who has hitherto been with us, now leaves us—He is a worthy, diligent young man : I take the liberty of recommending him for the living of —. It is now necessary my Lord should have for his companion a man possessed of all the exterior, as well as interior graces ; without which, the man of understanding must, in this world, always give way to the fool who is blest with them. I have been so singularly fortunate, as to procure Mr. Trueman, a man of the most extraordinary talents and accomplishments ; at the age of twenty-two, he is member of the academies of Padua, Bologna, Rome, and

Lyons : he is the most profound scholar, the best dancer ; in short, he possesses the most opposite qualifications, and I can no where give you (said my respectable friend Mr. R——) a more just idea of him, than by desiring you to read, in Mr. Pennant's Tour to Scotland, the character of the admirable Crichton, who fell a sacrifice, at the age of twenty-two, to the envy and implacable hatred of his pupil at Mantua ; and who was so much lamented that the whole court went into mourning for him. In short, after studying him thoroughly, I know no *one* science or accomplishment, that he is not so much master of, as to induce one to suppose he had applied his whole life to the study of *it* alone. Mr. Trueman is of a good family : he travelled with Lord Dacres,
but

but had left him on account of his irregularities, which he could not be a spectator of, without losing the peace of his own mind: this I apprehend must have been attended with inconveniencies to himself, as I do not find he has any independent fortune, and the Duke of A—— had settled very handsomely on him for life, providing he had remained three years with his son. But, to such men as him, the black broth of Sparta, with honour and a good conscience, would have a higher relish than all the delicacies of Philip's table without them. How blessed is that man, who, when calamity assails him, can acquit himself, his intentions at least, and say, "This I have not brought upon myse'f: it is an inevitable evil; a dispensation of Providence I will call it, and submit to it as such."

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I remain, dear Sir, with best respects
to my Lady, Miss Byron, and all your
family,

Your obedient,
obliged servant,

JAMES LEWIS.

L E T T E R VII.

From the Duchefs de CRUI, to Mrs.
PIERPONT.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

LADY Filmer, about a year after
the Lady F——s were under her
care, fent them to school at —— : they
were at this time, notwithstanding all
her

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her attentions, no further advanced than young ladies commonly are at eight years old. A mind unaccustomed to remark, or inexperienced in life, cannot possibly conceive how surprisngly *all* people are influenced by custom and early habits. Lady Sophia proved an instance of this, and that virtue or vice depend very essentially on our primary sentiments and examples; which, whether good or bad, will externally attend us in some measure through all possible transactions. It was with the utmost difficulty Lady Sophia could be prevailed on to apply herself to any thing: if Lady Filmer had possessed more ordinary talents, Lady Sophia would have comprehended many of her instructions better; as it was, they were quite beyond her reach: at the same time it must be confessed she had an *enjouement*, an easy flow

of sprightliness, that was very amusing, by not suffering the gloomy side of things to appear, and extracting from them only that which had a reference to cheerfulness, and was productive of festivity: but notwithstanding all her wit, it was with pain Lady Filmer was convinced, that according to the education now in vogue, she might be taught to conceal her faults, but no pains whatever could eradicate them. Lady Harriet, on the contrary, was endued with the most happy dispositions; the dawn of her understanding was like the mild and gentle rays of the rising sun: she was so sweetly gentle, so perfectly unassuming, that it was impossible to resist the partiality she inspired at first sight; add to this the eager desire she had for instruction, and it is not to be wondered at, that she made an entire conquest of lady Filmer's heart; who
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beheld her opening virtues with such raptures, as we suppose a guardian angel to feel on the first dawnings of virtue and excellence in his charge. Upon leaving the young ladies at school, on account of Lady Sophia's advanced age, they were placed as parlour-boarders. Lady Filmer privately acquainted the mistress of the boarding school, (a woman of good understanding, and accomplished manners) with her opinion of the young ladies particular dispositions, and talents. Every soil is not proper for all sorts of fruit; one ground is fit for grain, another for pasture: and so it is in the temper and disposition of children: some are more capable of one excellence than another; which is one of the great secrets of nature, and it is very hard to give a just and satisfactory account of it. "As to Lady Sophia, said

she, I am afraid you will find it difficult to make her apply—but above all things I beg you will instruct her that Christianity is the source of happiness in this world, and in the next : convince her of this truth, and she will never cease to be governed by it : people of any understanding will always *avoid* what they are certain would involve them in misery. This with her is the more necessary, as, in the early part of her life, she has imbibed false notions and libertine principles, which I am afraid will be found difficult to conquer : if the foundation in this particular be rightly laid, the parents or instructors of youth provide, in the amplest manner, for their honour, and their happiness, throughout the whole period of their existence ; not for a low, fleeting animal, but for a reasonable, moral, immortal life. I am more
fan-

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sanguine in my expectations of Lady Harriet, than her sister—I look for perfection in her, when I shall be satisfied if Lady Sophia rises above mediocrity. She has an extensive capacity, a retentive memory, and is capable of the greatest application: every desire Lady Harriet expresses for acquiring such knowledge as is out of the common course of education, must be assisted, providing it does not interfere with her more necessary studies, or hurt her health by a too close attention. I need not inform you further, added Lady Filmer, I know your excellent method, and strict observation of your scholars: I shall leave them entirely to your direction, and shall re-visit them again in three months, and mark the progress they have made.” The Duke thinks, my dear Mrs. Pierpont, that you should attempt, by all possible means, to elude

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clude your husband's dying intestate : I think you should send us your papers, and take every advice concerning it. I write you but a short letter, as I enclose Lady Filmer's letters, which she wrote to Sir James Bruce many years before the commencement of the *family narrative*. I am ever

truly, and

affectionately yours,

ELIZA DE CREIL.

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L E T T E R VIII.

From Lady FILMER, to Sir JAMES
BRUCE.

SIR,

MR. Addison tells us, "That one of the best springs of generous and worthy actions is, the having generous and worthy thoughts of ourselves; and that whoever has a mean opinion of the dignity of human nature, will act in no higher capacity than he has allotted himself in his own estimation." A low opinion of our intellectual faculties depresses the genius, as it cuts off all prospect of attaining any eminent degree of knowledge, and of executing any grand and extensive plan of improvement. Is it not then highly necessary for us to attain just notions of the intellectual system,

tem, to enable us to judge how far our capacities extend. Enquiries into human nature, though of the first importance, have been prosecuted with little care, and less success. Enquiries into the structure of the human body, have indeed been prosecuted with great diligence and accuracy: but this was a matter of no great difficulty to the anatomist. The human mind, on the contrary, is an object extremely changeable, *not* the same in two persons on earth, and even varying in the same person. But though it may be a matter of great difficulty to investigate and ascertain the laws of the mental constitution, yet there is no reason to doubt, however fluctuating it may seem, of its being governed by laws as invariable as those of the material system. It has been the misfortune of most of those who have studied the philosophy of the human mind, that

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that they have been little acquainted with the structure of the human body, and the laws of the animal oeconomy; and yet the mind and body are so intimately connected, and have such a mutual influence on one another, that the constitution of either examined apart, can never be thoroughly understood. The soul, while confined to the body, is dependent on its organization, in all its operations; and the more or less free or clogged these organs are, the more or less will the soul feel herself free or embarrassed in her exertions. Now as it is well known, that the organs in our sex are of a finer texture than in men, it naturally follows, that had women the same advantages of education as men, there would be no room to doubt but that they would be equal to them, in the sciences, and every branch of useful knowledge. The same Creator, by the
same

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same laws, unites the souls of men and women to their respective bodies; and the soul operating in the same manner in the one and in the other, is capable of the same functions in both. We receive the impressions of sense as they do, we retain ideas for the operation of our imaginations as they do; we have the same organs, and apply them to the same purposes: the only difference that can be pointed out between our organs and theirs *is*, that ours are more delicate: and consequently our feelings more exquisite, and our perceptions and sentiments more lively and animated.

Spirits are not finely touched,
But to fine issues; nor nature never lends
The smallest scruple of her excellence,
But, like a thrifty goddess, she determines
Herself the glory of a creditor,
Both thanks, and use.

Mr. Thomas, in his excellent Essay on the Character, Genius, and Manners of Women,

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men, has given us an historical picture, an assemblage of facts and observations, which evidently prove that women are susceptible of all the qualities, which religion, society, or government, would chuse to assign them. Where qualifications are not wanted, they are rarely found: great powers cannot be exerted, but when great exigencies make them necessary: great exigencies can happen but seldom, and therefore those qualities which have a claim to the veneration of mankind, lie hid. As life is too short for every attainment, sensible women naturally cultivate those talents that are most likely to render them beneficial to society. Hence the courage of suffering pain, is what they have in an eminent degree; and has it not been said in their favour, that they would sooner suffer than displease, and would a thousand times rather endure pain than reproach?

proach? This is, no doubt, owing to the variety of ills to which we are subjected by nature; at the same time, women should be conscious of their own *powers* if they wished to exert them with propriety, according to Mr. Addison's observation, when he tells us, "There is not a more improving exercise of the human mind, than to be frequently reviewing its great privileges and endowments; nor a more effectual means to awaken in us an ambition raised above little pursuits, than to value ourselves as heirs of eternity." Women are educated in this age according to the idea of the Turks; as if the only intention of their existence was to appear lovely for the first few years of their lives, and afterwards to sink into total oblivion in this world, and unconsciousness in the next. Upon this plan, it must be confessed, the men's ideas are very just; for as long as their persons are

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are rendered amiable, it matters not how disgusting their minds may be: they, therefore, whose charge it is to educate them judiciously, instruct them carefully in music, dancing, dressing, &c. but as to forming their understandings, or cultivating their genius, they are never so much as thought of: on the contrary it seems as if a pleasure was taken in debilitating both the one and the other. There is no distinction of sexes in virtue or vice; and whatever has been once determined to be the point of honour, in man or woman, will be equally defended by each: but let men say what they please, we will confute them by our conduct; as Diogenes baffled the sophist, who denied that there was any such thing as motion: the philosopher listened to a tedious discourse, and then contented himself only with walking care-

lessly about before him. What opinion should we form of that man's prudence, who in building a house which he was to inhabit the whole year, only had a view to the intense heat of the dog-days, without considering how few these are in proportion to the rest of the year, when the whole face of nature is changed; producing such tempestuous weather of various kinds, solstitial rains and equinoctial hurricanes, as demand the strictest attention to prevent the fatal effects of their depredations? We should certainly reckon his conduct very absurd; and equally must the conduct of that woman be, who, forgetful of approaching age, decline of beauty, and the various vicissitudes we are liable to meet with through the different stages of life, cultivates herself only for that short period, when her beauty excites admiration; leav-

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leaving her mind unprepared for encountering the inroads of time, the mortifying disappointments incident to maturity, and the various indispositions, &c. attending on old age. To a mind well informed, no state will appear as a real evil, into which we are conducted by the common and regular course of nature: but those who have no internal source of happiness, will find themselves uneasy in all the stages of life; every *one* of which is marked out by certain and defined limits, except the last; old age *alone* has no determinate boundary. We should take care to prepare ourselves to act with propriety, in each of these periods. To form a character as perfect as our nature admits of, a woman must adapt herself to the different situations and seasons of human life; each of which has its proper and distinguishing

characteristic; and she should gradually disclose her acquired perfections as years increase, without blending the playfulness of infancy with her youthful studies, or the simplicity of youth with the corrected reason of middle life, or the amusements of that period with the avocations respectable in old age. And as every stage of life hath its proper train of thoughts, and some peculiar biases, let it be our care to cultivate the former, and correct the latter, directing all our studies, and endeavours, to make ourselves useful, and easy, in this world, and happy in the next. The principal view in all our attainments being our ultimate end, whatever pleasure, profit, or use, there may be in learning, there is still more in true religion: the advantages of learning are but of short duration, those of religion are for eternity. In-
fancy

fancy and youth, middle-life and old age, have each of them their peculiar and appropriated pursuits: as youth does not regret the joys of infancy; or middle-life, that it has no longer a taste for the amusements of youth; so also those objects that are suitable in middle life, must be exchanged for others in old age. When Servius Tullius classed the Roman people, he divided their ages into three periods, limiting childhood to the age of seventeen, youth to forty-six, and old age from thence to the end of life.* As this discrimination was made principally with a view to the men, I would class women's ages as follows: I would limit infancy to fifteen, youth to thirty, middle life to fifty, and old age from thence to the end of life. And I would recom-

* Aul, Gel. lib. x. cap. 28.

mend it particularly to women to keep these dates constantly in their remembrance : the principles of our dissolution are derived to us with our existence, they are essential to our nature; our decays keep pace with time, which measures our transitory life : every moment subtracts from our duration on earth as much as it adds to it ; yet from the manner of our education, it is a melancholy truth, that the generality of our sex can bear any thing easier than the thoughts of approaching age. Whence, good sir, proceeds this glaring defect in our sex ? Is it not from a knowledge that contempt, for the most part, succeeds the adoration which was paid them in their youth ? and as, from a defect of education ; their minds are not sufficiently strengthened to despise the men for degrading their sex, so much as only to

con-

consider them as objects of fight ; their next resource is to put off the evil day as long as possible ; as if they could controul time itself, and it were equally at their command as paint and dress. Is a woman culpable in the eye of reason, because she was not born before many others ? The flowers of youth have their season, they blow and flourish, and in a few years are no more. The panacea, whatever its composition was, the transfusion of blood, and the other means that have been proposed for immortalizing or renewing in youth the body, are equally chimerical. In the life of man, as in the fruits of the earth, there is a certain point of maturity, beyond which the marks of decay must necessarily appear. To this unavoidable condition of her present being, every wise and good woman will submit with a contented and

chearful acquiescence : as it will be impossible for her to conceive, that the first and supreme Spirit, whose creatures, or whose emanations all other spirits are, will destroy a being he has made capable of so much happiness as she has already tasted.

It was with the hopes of immortality, that Socrates warmed his doubtful spirits against the cold potion : and Cato, before he durst give himself the fatal stroke, spent part of the night in reading Plato on the immortality of the soul. The Duties of Religion, are many, but easy ; strict, but pleasant ; and have nothing terrible or forbidding in them. Being convinced of this, a sensible woman will be in the pursuit of what wisdom and philosophy can yield : in consequence of which, she will be greatly reconciled to herself, and will find an ineffable satisfaction.

tisfaction in the silent approbation of her
 amusements ; whereas the remembrance
 of folly is irksome and painful ; but the
 pleasures and advantages, which flow
 from a well-ordered life, are intense,
 and permanent. The first years of our
 lives must make provision for the last :
 she who never accustoms herself to re-
 flection, can never be wise ; perpetual
 levity must end in ignorance. Youth
 is the vernal season of life ; and the
 blossoms it then puts forth, are indica-
 tions of those future fruits which are to
 be gathered in the succeeding periods ;
 now the proper fruit to be gathered in
 the autumn of our days, is to be able to
 look back with self-approving satisfac-
 tion, on the happy produce of past years.
 To this comfort in old age, the acci-
 dental possession of beauty in youth,
 often proves an insurmountable obstacle,
and

and is productive of the most baneful consequences, with regard to the cultivation of the mind. Sure of the admiration, a young lady neglects securing the esteem of the world; while another less indebted to nature for her person, finding the necessity of acquiring agreeable talents, not unfrequently seduces from mere beauty its greatest and most valuable votaries. If we consider, that the decline of beauty deprives us of the adoration of the men, it likewise delivers us from the tyranny of angry and contending passions, naturally produced by it; and consequently from many inordinate and irrational desires, which might preclude our retiring within ourselves, and looking for happiness in our own bosoms. If we learn the art of entertaining ourselves alone, without being melancholy, we shall soon find other company

pany not so necessary : and to these moral acquisitions, if we add that delicious aliment of the mind, which is gathered in the fields of knowledge, we shall surely obtain advantages, superior to those possessed by the most celebrated beauties and favourite toasts of the town. After perusing my letters, you will be sensible, sir, that I have no where been for the women's departing from their own character ; my intention being only to rectify your ideas of our sex : I did not mean to infringe the privileges of *yours* ; this would be to subvert society —I have aimed only at giving *it* a true lustre, by shewing that the modesty, meekness, humility, and reserve, which are such necessary ingredients in a complete female character, are no arguments of women's wanting sense, courage, conduct, and spirit, to act in a
sup-

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superior sphere, if occasion should call them to it. If I have said too much, I desire only to be judged by the standard of human nature: It may be observed that people where their profession is barely tolerated, are always more zealous than where it is established by law.

With best compliments to Lady Bruce, I remain,

dear Sir,

your humble servant,

AMELIA FILMER.

L E T.

L E T T E R IX.

From the Same, to the Same.

SIR,

AS I find you are not yet convinced by my arguments, I again take up my pen. You men declaim against our sex; you magnify your real faults; and search for, and create such as are merely imaginary. But our triumph arises from the efforts you make against it.

Envy does merit as its shade pursue;
And as a shadow proves the substance true.

I was unwilling to fatigue you by a recapitulation of many circumstances,
which

which you are much better acquainted with than myself; but find it now necessary to refresh your memory, by a long and tedious narration of female worthies. An excellent writer observes, “ Nothing should be esteemed as characteristical of a species, but what is to be found among the best and most perfect individuals of that species:” after which, if you continue to dispute our abilities, you must bid adieu to that natural rule of reasoning from analogy; must contradict that maxim of common sense, that men ought to form their judgments of things which are the objects of experience from what has been experienced. Human nature has been invariably the same in all ages, however perverted by prejudice, custom, or superstition. There are, indeed, self-evident

L E T T E R IX. 95

evident propositions, the truth of which, like the sun at noon, strikes unobserved light upon the mind: to cavil or conjecture against these, would be to war with demonstration, and combat with truth and Heaven. The cause of virtue and our sex can hardly be separated; sorry I am, that in me they will find so weak a champion, being conscious, that among the many arguments I shall produce of the superior talents of women, the visible deficiency of my own will appear a powerful argument against me. And did I not suspect you would consider my silence as a tacit confession of what you advanced, I should have quitted the subject, as conscious of my own incapacity of doing justice to it. Women, though consigned by nature to private virtues and domestic excellence, have undoubt-

undoubtedly been found, upon urgent occasions, to adventure in bold and heroic acts, especially when roused to the exertion of masculine deeds by sensibility and a virtuous feeling. There are extremities, in which the human soul spurns all the weakneses of nature, and tours above them by her native vigour; with an energy and enthusiasm of action, which perhaps might well be adduced as one intimation that we have a divine and immortal spark within us. Women are certainly not inferior to men in resolution, and perhaps much less in courage than is commonly imagined: the reason they appear so is, because women affect to be more afraid than they really are, and men pretend to be less. Women have been known even to sacrifice their own lives for the safety

safety of a husband, a brother, or a son: fearful and weak as they are, they often behave more courageously than the other sex, under pains, sickness, want, and even the terrors of death. Many men have been brave from principle who were timid by nature: and why should the like spirit be so partially denied to women? There are men as void of courage as the most heartless of our sex. What is it that renders women more hypochondriac and vapourish than men? Their sedentary life and want of exercise. These Maccaroni gentlemen that live like them, are subject to the same disorders: are there not many of these ambiguous beings, more effeminate than the most timid woman?

Throw but a stone, the giant dies.

These gentlemen are perfectly intelligent, in the laws of their *club*; the con-

stitution, history, and genealogy, of their horses; and the privileges conferred by the game-act. But as for more useful studies, they bequeath them to the *dull men of sense and reason*. A man who can be engrossed with such trifles, has generally no great understanding; and the weakness of those intellects which renders him delighted with folly, naturally exposes him to the allurements of vice. Incapable of judging between an error and a crime, he is seldom honourable, and never honest: a stranger to the proper means of promoting his own happiness, he is not fit to be trusted with that of another; and being by nature vicious, habit makes him despicable, and, as the poet finely says,

Th' affections of his mind are dark as night,
and dull as Erebus.

——— Let no such man be trusted.

Wo-

L E T T E R IX: 99

Women, at this time, really should be pardoned, if they usurp the management of the most important affairs, since so many of the men have usurped the government of the looking-glass and the toilette. Men become weaker than women, when educated in sloth and softness; whereas women that are brought up hardily, are often more robust than men. Active people were in such repute among the Greeks, that Homer, always judicious in his epithets, never mentions the illustrious Achilles, without adding, *swift-footed*; and it was not the least among the emperor Trajan's merits, that he had marched on foot to the farthest boundaries of the empire. When Cyrus was exasperated against the Lydians for revolting, Cræsus, their former king, gave him the following sagacious advice, " Oh ! Cyrus, destroy

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not Sardis, an ancient city, famous for arts and arms; encourage luxury, and you will soon see, O king! that instead of men, they will become women." Diodorus Siculus, says of the Scythians, "That the *women* were trained up to war as the *men*, to whom they were not inferior in courage or strength." If proper exercise can invigorate the *weak*, inactivity must debilitate the *strong*. Mr. Locke insists on a hardy education, as improving the faculties of the mind by invigorating the body. If we regulate our conduct by the dictates of human reason, why is not a woman capable of enduring hardships as well as a man, since of women, as well as men, human nature is the mother? It is not nature which condemns women to a retired, idle way of life, but the abuses of the world, not to say the tyrannic power of the
the

men, who will not divide their authority with us. Give to a woman the education of a man, and she also will be able to make a glorious figure in the world. To a willing mind nothing is difficult: human life being a mixture of good and evil, it is not enough to have spirit to enterprize every thing, but we must also have courage to suffer every thing. The conduct of life is the great business of a rational mind: and the dignity and propriety of that conduct is what marks superiority of mind. The power of wisdom is a poor thing, if it is not employed. It is vain to triumph in the possession of what we do not use. Misers may as well boast of their feasts, as men of genius of their lucid intervals. Women of moderate capacities may plead that occasion calls them to the performance of tasks to

which they are unequal; but it is a dismal reflection, that where nature has made women fit for all things, they by their own faults make wide chasms in life, in which they are fit for nothing, or at least fit only to be exposed for the example of others. But to return, feminine weakness did not prove an obstacle to the achievements of the Amazons in Scythia, of Camilla in Italy, the Maid of Orleans in France, or Boadicia in England: on the contrary, these celebrated women persevered in their tracks of glory, with unremitted resolution, to the last period of their lives. When the Sicambri, a Gallic tribe, began to retire from the field of battle; their women met them, and uncovered their bosoms, saying, “Strike here, ye cowards! we wish that you would slay us, rather than expose us to
the

the disgrace attendant on slavery." This behaviour, these reproaches, raised the courage of the Sicambri, and alarmed their pride : they rallied, returned to the charge, repulsed and entirely defeated the enemy, who had supposed themselves in possession of the victory. The duke of Burgundy, who was continually at war with Lewis II. having laid siege to Beauvois ; as soon as his artillery had made a sufficient breach to attempt the assault, he immediately ordered it to be made : the besieged having sustained it for three hours with great gallantry, began to lose courage, when the women ran to their assistance, some armed with pikes, others with sticks pointed with iron : one in particular distinguished herself, by wrestling the colours out of the hands of a Burgundian cap-

tain: all engaged in the combat, and all exposed themselves with as much intrepidity as if they thought death paid a particular regard to their sex: the Burgundians were repulsed, and some days after raised the siege. In commemoration of this action, an annual procession was instituted on the twelfth day of July, where the women had the precedence of the men. Tacitus speaking of the French, says, That they heard the shouts of their wives from the field of battle; that they wished them of all others to be the witnesses and panegyrists of their actions: that they had sometimes prevented the rout of their enemies, and rallied the troops by their exhortations and remonstrances. These nations dreaded captivity more on account of their women than themselves; and

and the Romans availing themselves of this apprehension, often demanded their noblest virgins for hostages *. Cæsar acquaints us that the Parisians were one of those states that composed the republic of Gaul, and which only formed a single nation, though independent of each other. Each of these people had their peculiar laws, chiefs, and magistrates: and appointed every year deputies to the general assemblies; which were usually held in the college of the Druids, in the middle of a forest in the county of Chartrain. The administration of civil and political affairs, had for a considerable time, been entrusted to a senate of women, elected by the different cantons. They deliberated on peace and war, and decided the differences which arose among the Virgo-

* Tacit. de Morib. Germ. p. 97.

brete,† or that took place betwixt one city and another. Plutarch informs us*, that by one of the articles between Hannibal and the Gauls, it was stipulated, “That if any Gaul had reason to complain of a Carthaginian, he must appear before the senate of Carthage, established in Spain. If any Carthaginian finds himself injured by a Gaul, the affair must be decided by the supreme council of Gallic Women.” The Druids, discontented with some decrees of this tribunal, so artfully employed the influence which religious superstition gave them over the minds of men, that they caused it to be abolished, and created one of their own in its stead. Few people are judges of sense and reason, but every one can see grimace, and feel en-

† Sovereign or chief magistrate.

* De claris. Mulierb.

thusiasm,

thufiasm, both of which were artfully employed on this occafion. The Druids obtained the fame pre-eminence as the women had, and they availed themfelves of it to appear the firft body of the ftate. It is to be obferved, that the Gauls under the government of the women, had taken Rome, and kept Italy in conftant terror, and under that of the Priests, they were themfelves fubdued by the Romans. And that Cæfar, owed his conquelts to the jealousies and divifions which a Druid, the perfidious Divitiacus, inceffantly fowed amongft the people.

The women were alfo invefted with the management of public affairs among the Sitones, or Norwegians. If wifdom proceeds from a clear apprehenfion, diftinct judgment, and cool deliberation, why fhould women be excluded from
ftate

state affairs? It is not by corporeal strength and activity that momentous affairs are conducted; but by prudent and sage counsel, and that authoritative influence which ever attends on public esteem. The celebrated general of the Grecian forces never wishes for ten Ajaxes, but for ten such officers as Nestor, to be secure of soon laying the walls of Troy level with the ground. Designs are not always certain to succeed by force; but if at all practicable, never miscarry when prudence and good counsel are made use of. The Romans held Fabius Maximus in much greater esteem than Marcellus, calling Marcellus the sword of the commonwealth, and Fabius the shield, one being fit to *acquire*, the other to *preserve*: but the preservation of the state being of most consequence, they had much more veneration for the *wisdom* and *prudence*

LETTER IX. 109

dence of the one, than the *valour* and *courage* of the other. The author of the Political Aphorisms, says, “ Women in the greatest emergencies, and most eminent perils, are never at a loss to find a remedy, or to hit on some expedient; nay their counsels are the best resources: for such is the natural genius of that sex, that in impending dangers, their very first impulses of soul are greatly excellent and happy. In the establishment of the Chinese empire, the ministers are divided into two classes, that of the Thinkers, and that of the Expeditors; these last are charged with the detail and dispatch of business, and answers to our common statesmen: the Thinkers, on the contrary, have no other occupation than to form projects, or examine those that are offered to them. “ This is, says an ingenious writer, the

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the source of the many singular institutions, which strike us only with a cold admiration, and which might prove the happiness of a nation that would imitate them."

I cannot help thinking, that had women been employed in the latter capacity in Great Britain, it would have been no loss to the nation on many occasions.

It is to be feared, we have many ministers who press forward into office, without having learned this *art* of thinking. And they mistake the petulance, which could give inspiration to smart sarcasms on an obnoxious measure in a popular assembly, for the ability which is to ballance the interest of kingdoms, and investigate the sources of national superiority. Abilities alone are not sufficient to entitle a representative
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L E T T E R IX. III

to a seat in parliament: his constituents ought to pay a particular regard to his morals: it will be of little service to them, that he is clear in his understanding, unless he is untainted in his integrity; on the contrary, talents without virtue, will only furnish him with the means of doing more detriment to society. With the administration of such men, the people can never be satisfied; nor besides, that their confidence is gained only by the view of superior talents, there needs that depth of knowledge which is not only acquainted with the just extent of power, but can also discover a proper expedient to preserve those at the helm of affairs from the contempt which attends irresolution, or the resentment which follows temerity. The author of the Guardian says, “ that
Wo-

Women of quality should apply themselves to letters, because their husbands are generally strangers to them, and it is a great pity that there should be no knowledge in the family." But I am serious in advancing, that had certain honourable gentlemen consulted their wives on speeches they were to make in the house, it is probable that the *one* would not have talked of the island of Pennsylvania, nor the *other* of the continent of Newfoundland; nor would the ministry have been in a pannic the war before last, when a wag sent intimation to them, that the French fleet were landed at Arthur-seat, near Edinburgh; and that Broughty-castle was besieged. You may remember Cervantes makes the princess of Micomicon (in his Don Quixote) land at Offuna, though it is not a sea port! by which he introduced a fine
piece

piece of satire on an eminent Spanish historian of his time, who had described it as such. But to return from this digression: the Scandinavian tribes were accompanied at their assemblies by venerable hoary-headed prophetesses, dressed in long linen vestments of a splendid white †. Their matrons and daughters acquired great reverence from their skill in studying simples, and the knowledge of healing wounds. The wives frequently attended their husbands in the most perilous expeditions, and fought with great intrepidity in the most bloody engagements. The Goths, also, believed some divine and prophetic quality to be inherent in women; they regularly consulted them on the business of the state: and women were suffered to conduct the great events they predicted.

† Strab. Geograph. lib. viii. p. 285.

Ganna, a prophetic virgin of the Marcomanni, a German or Gaulish tribe, was sent to **Rome**, and admitted into the presence of Domitian, to treat concerning terms of peace †. Tacitus mentions another prophetess who held frequent conferences with the Roman generals; and that on some occasions, on account of the sacredness of her person, she was at a great distance on a high tower, from whence, like an oracular divinity, she conveyed her answers by some chosen messenger. Several ages of antiquity have transmitted accounts of the Amazons of Caucasus, and of the Amazons of America, who have given their name to the greatest river in the world. The Bohemian matrons are said to have made a short struggle for superiority: but instead of banishing the men, they

† Dio. Sic. x. lib. vii. p. 761.

condemned them to servile employments; and their constitution, left thus imperfect, was quickly (as it deserved to be) destroyed.

The mighty Ninus, founder of the Assyrian empire, at his death appointed his wife Semiramis regent of his vast dominions, during his son's minority, being sensible none had a greater genius for empire. She distinguished her government by the most renowned exploits in war, by the wisdom of her administration, and by the most glorious works of peace: she built the matchless Babylon, besides other great emporiums on the banks of the Tygris and Euphrates. The next queen I shall mention is Zenobia, in whom the regal virtues were equally conspicuous as in the former: a princess no less worthy than happy to have had Longinus for her precep-

tor : she was mistress of every excellence that could dignify human nature ; and knew as well how to write as to conquer. She afterwards maintained her dignity in her misfortunes, and consoled herself for the loss of a throne, and the pleasures of grandeur, with the sweets of solitude, and the tranquility which reason bestows on its votaries. Alexandra, the wife of Alexander king of the Jews, after the death of her husband, seeing the populace in arms, with the intent of murdering her two sons, to revenge the tyranny of their father ; by her address and prudence mitigated their just resentments, and gained her sons the hearts of a people, which their father by a thousand injuries had embittered against them. What English monarch ever excelled our incomparable queen Elizabeth in the arts of ruling ? Her glorious administration

was

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was one continued exercise of the most refined politics. Another of our queens, Margaret of Anjou, wife of Henry VI. exerted her genius and activity in supporting, a long time, a feeble husband: she taught him to conquer, she twice relieved him from prison; and, after reducing his rebellious subjects, at last restored him to his throne. We have heard, in the war of 1741, of a princess, admired even by her enemies who defended the German Empire with no less genius than courage.

I need not enumerate the names of other princesses who have distinguished themselves as sovereigns: they are inscribed in the barbarous annals of the times in which they lived, and have since been repeated by a number of panegyrists, particularly by Brantome, who wrote

the lives of *illustrious women*. But as I would not imitate the French Plutarch, who was a courtier, I shall not confine feminine excellence to *queens* and *princesses*, however partial I am to birth. As I am convinced you are heartily tired, I shall soon conclude, after asking you, whether king Erick would not have appeared to greater advantage, had he not immediately succeeded queen Margaret? and if it was not an infelicity to king James, that he succeeded queen Elizabeth?

The history of the empress Irene furnishes with an instance of a reign which was as *singular* and remarkable, as her elevation to the throne was sudden and unexpected; born of an obscure, though not ignoble family, she could have no pretensions or expectation to
mount

mount the throne of the emperors of the East. Leon, the son of Constantine, no sooner saw her make her appearance at Constantinople, than he became enamoured of her, and married her, with his father's approbation. After the death of her husband, she appeared with all the dignity and splendour of an empress, and manifested the most uncommon talents for political intrigue, and all the sinister arts of government.

There are few born to reign over provinces; but we have every one an empire in our own hearts; we have rebellious passions to subdue; we have some noble sentiments to cherish and improve. It should therefore be the study of our sex, to learn in what manner to govern their passions, which are too apt to raise intestine commotions, and dethrone their natural sovereign, reason.

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And that we may do nothing which may occasion a diffension, let us not aim at imposing new laws : but, respecting our first customs, persevere in virtue, in constancy, and fidelity ; and we may then (you will allow, Sir) boast to have reigned with as much glory as the greatest monarchs. *Which that we may all do,* is the hearty prayer of, Sir,

your obedient,

humble servant,

AMELIA FILMER.



L E T-

L E T T E R X.

From the Same, to the Same.

SIR,

I Make no apology for this intrusion; you have brought it on yourself. I begin however to be afraid that the punishment exceeds the offence.

We find, in the writings of Plutarch, a piece entitled the Virtuous Actions of Women, “ One might (says this philosopher of Chæroneæ) make a comparison between Anacreon and Sappho; between Semiramis and Sesostris; between Tanaquil and Servius; between Brutus and Portia; the same talents and the same virtues are modified by the same circumstances, and by the persons: but the

the foundation is the same, though the colour and the surface (so to speak) are different." The historian next proceeds to mention a great number of women of all ages, who have shewn a generous contempt for death. He instances the Phœnician women; who, before an engagement which threatened the destruction of their city, agreed to expire in the flames, if the battle should be lost; and crowned the woman with flowers who first made that motion in council. He tells us of other women, who resisted despotism and oppression, who, as soon as the tyrant was slain, ran dancing before the conspirators, and crowned them with their own hands; of some, who gave liberty to their country: of several who exposed themselves to death, and to be loaded with chains, to save their captive husbands: and he

takes

takes particular notice of Camma, who poisoned herself at the altar, that she might poison the murderer of her husband, and who, turning to the assassin, said, "Thee! this instant I order, in place of a nuptial bed, to prepare thyself a tomb."

To these great and generous qualities, Plutarch has joined the softer, and perhaps the more attractive virtues, as being more natural to the sex. In all the characters we read of excellent women, there is not a more illustrious instance of filial piety, than in the story of Cimonus: who being cast into prison, and there adjudged to be starved to death; his daughter Xantippe fed him through the iron grate with the milk of her own breasts. Plutarch has also left a piece in honour of the Spartan dames, "where (Mr. Thomas acquaints us) he cites a variety

variety of facts which demonstrates their courage and vigour of mind. Nature sacrificed to patriotism, honour ranked before affection, the name of citizen preferred before the name of mother, tears of joy shed over the body of a dead son pierced with wounds, the maternal hands armed against a son guilty of cowardice, the mandate of death conveyed to a son suspected of a crime, and even compassion regarded as a weakness." He gives us a singular instance of the intrepidity and fortitude of a Spartan woman, in a state of servitude (a prisoner, and sold as a slave): the question was put to her, What knowest thou? "To be free," she replied: and when her master commended what she deemed ignominious, she coolly said, "You are unworthy of me:" and resigned herself to death.

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The wife of the governor of Berwick Castle, affords us an instance of female heroism : his two sons were in the possession of the besiegers as hostages ; who violating their honour, threatened to hang them up instantly under the walls before his eyes, if he did not surrender. The father being shocked, and torn by contending passions, like Agamemnon in the Iphigenia, who presents a lively picture of human nature, when doubly besieged : nature prevailed, and he was on the point of complying with their request, when his wife animated him by saying, “ You may have other children ; your honour once lost can never be regained.” The two young warriors, in consequence of this advice, fell victims for the good of their country, and the preservation of a fortress, which at that time was a place of great impor-

importance for the Scotch to possess, as a barrier against the English. There is also a remarkable instance, in the history of Scotland, of a lady at Perth, who when assassins were attempting to enter the apartment of her sovereign, supplied the want of a bolt, to one of the gates of the house, with her delicate arm, which was instantly shattered in pieces.

Posterity has preserved the memory of the wife of Seneca, Pompeia Paulina, who protested to her husband she would not survive him a moment: their veins were opened at the same time; but Nero sent people to prevent Paulina's death, by binding up her wounds. The paleness which ever after remained in her looks, (says an historian) was an honourable mark of her courage and fidelity. The wife of Pætus furnishes another example of this kind, who stabbed herself

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self to encourage her desponding husband to follow her example; it was most likely the shame of surviving, which influenced him—The poor man had no choice left but to do as he was directed. The manner of their death has afforded Martial the subject of an elegant Epigram, which has been thus paraphrased.

When to her husband, Arria gave the sword,
Which from her chaste, her bleeding breast she drew.
She said, my Pætus, this I do not feel,
But oh! the wound, that must be made by you!
She could no more, but on her Pætus still,
She fix'd her feeble, her expiring eyes:
And when she saw him raise the pointed steel, she
 sunk—
And seemed to say, “ Now Arria dies!”

I do not, however, pretend to justify Suicide. Nothing but the barbarous age these people lived in, and their ignorance and superstition, could excuse
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self-destruction. But these were times when the extravagance of human nature was such, as led them to deify the most horrid vices. As they had not yet learned the secret of our modern adepts in iniquity—To keep vice in countenance, by bidding defiance to Heaven itself, and treading religion under foot.

We find that courage has always been in both sexes most evidently displayed under the banners of enthusiasm. I observed in Mezeray, under the article Croisade, preached by St. Bernard, in the year 1157, that he says, “Several women did not content themselves with taking the cross, but they also took up arms to defend it, and composed squadrons of females.”

I cannot help remarking, that religious wars are never mentioned, either among
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the Assyrians, Medes, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Gauls, Germans, or any other ancient nations. Such a solecism in religion was reserved for christianity : but how is it possible, that such inhumanity should have taken its rise among the professors of a religion which so strongly recommends benevolence and charity ? But where am I running !—It must be confessed that my digressions are *not* a little *Pindaric*. Mr. Thomas acquaints us, “ That during the time of the Crusades, women, animated by the double enthusiasm of religion and of valour, often performed the most valiant exploits, and died with arms in their hands : this warlike disposition in them continued for near four hundred years, and, in consequence of the prevailing passion, women quitted the soft and tender inclinations of their own sex, for the toilsome

occupations of the other. But there were æras, and countries, in which that spirit appeared with peculiar lustre; as during the fifteenth and sixteenth Centuries, in the Archipelago, and Mediterranean, where they were invaded by the Turks. Every thing conspired to animate the women of these countries with an exalted courage; the prevailing spirit of the foregoing ages, the terror which the name of the Turks inspired, the difference of religion, which produced a kind of sacred horror, the striking difference of manners, and above all the confinement of the female sex, which presented to the women of Europe, nothing but the dreadful ideas of servitude and a master, the tears of beauty in the embrace of a barbarian, and the double tyranny of love and pride."

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Women surely could not then be justly accused, because they forsook the more domestic duties, when they were called upon by the motives of religion and honour, to defend their country: and these are the principles which have generally given birth to the greatest actions of women.

I shall not have recourse to scripture, for fear of prophaning divine truths with my foolish reasoning: like Margaret of Navarre, called the *tenth Muse*, and the *fourth Grace*, who amused herself with the comic art; and, by a false zeal, treated of subjects too venerable to have been exposed upon the stage.* Neither shall I alledge the great numbers of women, who for the name of

* See in the collection of the Poesies of that Princess, the comedies of the Nativity of our Saviour, and of the Innocents, and of the Desert.

Christ, have with an admirable constancy suffered themselves to be barbarously murdered by tyrants. Nor of those who by their learned disputes have confuted the professors of idolatry. In the second Triumvirate, the *three assassins* who governed Rome, having exhausted every other method of plunder, resolved to tax the women, and imposed a heavy contribution on each of them: they sought an orator to defend their cause, but found none; no man would reason against those who had the power of life and death. The daughter of the celebrated Hortensius, alone appeared: she revived the memory of her father's abilities, and supported with intrepidity her own cause and that of her sex: the ruffians blushed, and revoked their orders. Hortensia had that day the honour of giving an example of courage to men,
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a pattern of eloquence to women, and a lesson of humanity to tyrants. Appian has preserved her oration, which he says she pronounced with intrepidity, where men, bending under oppression, durst not raise their eyes, or open their mouths.

At Verona, in the fifteenth Century, Isotta Nogarolla, acquired so great a reputation for her eloquence, that even *kings* submitted to listen, and as scholars to attend her.

What must we think of Aspasia's abilities, who had Pericles for a lover, and Socrates for a disciple, who, speaks of her in terms of veneration! Her superior qualities engaged the most considerable persons in Athens, not only to visit her, but to bring their wives to hear her lectures.

Cicero was intimately acquainted with a lady named Cerilla: he often in his *Epistles*, recommends her taste for books and philosophy. This their common inclination made him fond of her writings. He also speaks with honour of the Roman ladies, who, in his time, had the greatest taste for elegant learning and polite language. Therefore aiming to distinguish himself in the art of eloquence, he employed the intervals of his leisure in their company; and while he improved his knowledge by the lessons of Scævola the augur, he polished his language by the conversation of Lælia, his consort; whose conversation, according to his own testimony, was tinged with the elegance of her father Lælius, the most polished orator of the age.

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“ After the declension of chivalry in Europe (says Mr. Thomas), when the universal thirst of knowledge drew the attention of all Europe to the study of languages, women began to assume a new character; soon after we see them preach, unravel controversies — support opinions — fill the chairs of philosophy and law — harrangue in Latin before the Pope — read Hebrew, and write in Greek. Women of quality, and young girls, perfected in eloquence, with the sweetest features, and softest voice, pathetically exhorting the Holy Father and the Christian princes, to make war against the Turks.”

Need I send to Greece for the nine Sibyls, and nine lyric Poetesses, to add my argument? Vossius, Midas, and Lilius Geraldus, inform the world of Megalosttrade, and the daughters of

Stesichorus; of the three Theanos, one the wife of Pythagoras, who improved his school after his decease. Athenæus thought it an ornament to his works to quote the poetess Hadyle; and Diogenes Laertius deemed it no disgrace to Plato, to give him for company his fair disciples Lasthemia and Axiothea, besides the beautiful Hipparchia, whose life in particular he disdains not to write: in which he celebrates her, as equally excellent in dramatic poetry, ethics, and philosophy.

Dionysius Halicarnasseus, and Longinus, two of the ablest critics of their time, celebrate the merit of Sappho. Permit me only to add, in continuation of this subject, a few ladies of the present age: Signora Bassi at Bologna, who was presented with a doctor's physical degree, and who gives public lectures; and

and Signora Agnese, so famed in the literary world for a treatise on Analyses, in consideration of which, besides panegyrics from all the learned bodies of Europe, a professorship of mathematics has been conferred on her, in the University of Bologna. Notwithstanding these honours, she was deaf to all entreaties of the learned, or her friends: she withdrew herself from the world, retired into a nunnery near Milan, and has sacrificed to christian humility all the enjoyments and honours which her acquaintance, and talents, would otherwise have obtained for her in the world.

But our own country furnishes sufficient instances of the various perfections and talents of women. The three Seymours, sisters, nieces to a king, and daughters to a protector, all celebrated for their learning, and for their elegant
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latin verses. The unfortunate Jane Grey, whose elevation to the throne was only a step to the scaffold. Ascham, in his School-master, relating the memorable visit he paid to her before her execution, takes notice that he found her reading the Phædo, Plato's Dialogue on the Immortality of the Soul, in Greek. The eldest daughter of Sir Thomas More, whose learning was almost eclipsed by her virtues: she corresponded in Latin with the great Erasmus, who styled her the ornament of Britain: a lady whose filial piety must exact the admiration of the latest ages.

We behold in Scotland, Mary Queen of Scots, the most beautiful woman of her age, and one of the most learned: she spake six different languages; composed elegant verses in French, and, when very young, delivered an oration in Latin
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before the court of France, to prove that the study of letters, is consistent with the female character. Lady Pilkington is known to have been the real author of the *Whole Duty of Man*; and of several other moral and divine treatises, written with so much temper, purity, piety, philosophy, and good sense, that she may be justly reckoned the glory of her sex, and an honour to human nature : what greatness of mind, and goodness of heart, must the person be possessed of, who could deny herself the honour of such works, lest the name of Woman should render them less serviceable to mankind !

The Duchess of Newcastle was the first English lady who attempted what is now called polite literature ; and has left us a variety of compositions in prose and verse.

verse. But the present age sufficiently demonstrates to what our sex are equal: I shall transcribe what the Reverend Dr. Birch says of one of them * in the History of the works of the Learned.†
 “ This lady, says he, is a very extraordinary phænomenon in the republic of letters, and justly to be ranked with the Cornelias, Sulpicias, and Hypatias of the ancients: the Scharmans, and Daciers of the moderns. For to an uncommon vivacity and delicacy of genius, and an accuracy of judgment worthy the maturest years, she has added the knowledge of the ancient and modern languages, at an age, when a competent skill in any one of them, would be no inconsiderable distinction in a person of the other sex.”

* Miss Carter.

† For June 1739.

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You say we are incapacitated from state affairs, because we quarrel with one another, and cannot keep a secret. If women quarrel about trifles, do we not also see men, and even those on whose nod whole kingdoms depend, *going together by the ears*, about matters of equal consequence with that disputed among the Lilliputians, viz. whether they should break their eggs at the great or small end! As to our capacity of keeping a secret, if we may credit Plutarch, he informs us, that Læna of Athens, who was engaged in a conspiracy against Pisistratus, fearing lest the exquisite torture she was put to, might extort any discovery from her, bit her tongue off. The same author, in another part of his works, has recorded the women's talent for secrecy, in those of Melita, of whom,

whom, though all were in conspiracy with their husbands, not one discovered the secret. Tacitus has perpetuated the memory of Epicharis, whom all the cruelties of Nero could not induce to betray any of the secrets she was privy to, in the conspiracy against him. If Homer commends Ulysses and Telemachus, for their steadiness in keeping a secret, he is no less eloquent in the praises of Penelope and Euclea, for the same virtue. Angerona was so famous for this virtue, that the Romans worshipped her for the goddess of silence; in honour of whom, the Athenians placed before the gate of the castle, a brazen lionsess without a tongue! to denote thereby the command she had over her's, for she was not terrified by the death of two great men her friends,

friends, nor, by all the engines of pain, could be compelled to reveal any one of the conspirators.

Mr. Dryden indeed says,

Thus through a woman was the secret known;
Tell them, and in effect you tell the town.

He treats the clergy in the same illiberal manner, in a proverb he valued himself much upon; “— priests of all religions are the same.” In which there is as much falshood as malignity.

Dr. Echard, in his *Ground and Occasions of the Contempt of the Clergy*, gives the following passage, from a sermon preached at Paris on Easter-Sunday, by an abbot (for which he was censured by the church); it was at a time, when French eloquence was at
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the height, in the reign of Lewis XIV. that enquiring in his sermon, why Jesus, after his resurrection, appeared first to the two Marys? he answered gravely, "Because God would have the mystery of his resurrection made public, and women coming first to the knowledge of so important a matter, the news would be soon spread."

St. Jerome, who was a philosopher, as well as an orator, and father of the church, had so much esteem for women, that he dedicated many of his works to them. This would have been absurd, if he had not thought them competent judges. He extolled a lady for her goodness of heart, in keeping secret an affair highly detrimental to her worldly interest, but which would cast a blemish on a person who had been famed for piety,
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I have infifted more particularly on this head, becaufe if you fuppose women are incapable of keeping a fecret—I look upon it to be indirectly infinuating, that there is no kind of imperfection, whereof they are not capable. I fhall now, fir, conclude, after having given you the origin of the Salic law, as it is both whimfical and ridiculous. But I cannot omit firft taking notice of the want of candour in a noble author, now deceased, who, in his History of Henry II. mentions the inveterate prejudices which the Englifh in thofe days, entertained againft the idea of a female fucceffion. “ In all the hiftory, fays he, of the Anglo-Saxons, fince the firft day of their fettling in Britain, there is but one inftance of a lady’s being allowed to fuc-

ceed to the crown, viz. Sexburge the wife of Cenwalch, king of the West-Saxons; she reigned but a year; and Matthew of Westminster says, "She was expelled with disdain by the nobles, who would not fight under a woman." William of Malmfbury however gives a very different account of Sexburge; but his Lordship endeavours to obviate this, by acquainting us, this author may have avoided publishing a fact, which was so unfavourable to the cause of the empress Matilda, in a book which he dedicated to her brother the Earl of Gloucester." His lordship omitted telling us, that this queen retired to a house of devotion, and there died. We have in the history of the same kingdom, an instance of Ethelburga, the wife of Ina, who, in her husband's absence, headed an army against Eadbert, a pretender to

to his crown, took and demolished his castle of Taunton, and obliged him to depart out of that kingdom. His Lordship has mentioned Elfreda, whom he allows some writers call queen of the Mercians, but without remarking that her military exploits equalled those of the greatest warriors of that age.

When the succession of the French monarchy fell to a woman, after the death of Lewis X. his brother Philip Earl of Poitou, the first prince of the blood, who pretended to be preferred before the king's daughter, had gained over to his interest the greatest preacher of his time, who was Bishop of Amiens. This prelate, preaching before those who were to decide this controversy, took for his text, "The lilies neither toil nor spin:" these being the arms of France, he most learnedly

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proved,

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proved, and you may suppose, fir, by what strong arguments, that God having declared the lilies did not spin, they could not without sin, give the crown to the distaff. And thus it was adjudged to the king's brother, in prejudice to the king's daughter. This was the beginning of the Salic law; and I imagine this passage will not be disagreeable, as it concludes this long, and I fear, tiresome epistle.

With best compliments to Lady Bruce,

I remain, Sir,

your obedient,

humble Servant,

AMELIA FILMER.

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Continuation of the Family Narrative.

L E T T E R X I.

From the Duchefs DE CRUI, to Mrs.
PIERPONT.

DEAR MADAM,

THE Lady F——s were kept three years at school, during which time they had been instructed in every thing fuitable to their rank and genius : at this time Lady Filmer brought Lady Sophia home, as judging she could not remain longer there, with propriety, on account of her advanced age. She would have been happy to have taken Lady Harriet from school at the same time, but was

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not over-fond of her associating much with her sister, until her reason was more confirmed, and her judgment strengthened. She soon found the care of Lady Sophia alone, a very difficult task : it was very hard to restrain her vivacity, or to give her just ideas of the world. She often said to Mrs. Ross (an amiable woman, who had lived with her several years); that she could have no sympathy with Lady Sophia; " Our natures, said she, are not the same : my organs are incapable to convey my sentiments to her apprehensions, nor can I frame a language that is intelligible to her's." This may be easily understood, if we recollect that the greatest part of mankind, especially the illiterate, are always guided more by their external senses, than by their minds and understandings; and therefore more easily com-

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comprehend single objects and examples, than abstract propositions, syllogisms, and refined reasonings. Lady Filmer's literary merit has already been mentioned—She soon discovered that with Lady Sophia she must greatly descend in her style to be understood, and to descend so very far, was no very easy matter for her Ladyship: but the goodness of her heart made every sacrifice easy to herself, by which she could be of any service to mankind; she therefore endeavoured to clothe her words in the simplest garb: she reminded her of the tender sollicitude she had always shewn for her—which attention, on her part, could only proceed from affection.

“ I have now (said she), Lady Sophia, taken you from school, to introduce you into the world. It is of the utmost consequence to order the first

steps you take *in it*, that they may afford room for favourable conjectures on your future conduct. It is hard to remove early taken prejudices, whether of liking or dislike: people will *bunt* for reasons to confirm first impressions, in compliment to their own sagacity, nor is it every mind that has the ingenuity to confess itself mistaken, when it finds itself wrong."

As Lady Filmer thought it highly necessary to warn Lady Sophia of the dangerous influence of the more powerful passions, and by good principles to fortify her against their force; and the more so, as she feared that she had been accustomed in her early years to hear those irregularities which are the effects of strong passions, made too light of: she instructed her, that the irregular indulgence of the passions brings infamy on those

those who are actuated by them. The terrible effects which they produce are to be seen in history. "For," said this excellent monitress, "Why do we read the transactions of past times? Why are we so fond of biography? Not surely as matters of mere amusement, but as containing facts, which, attended to, and properly digested, may serve to direct us in the conduct of our lives." She then acquainted her, that the seeds of all these passions were in her heart; as well as in that of the rest of mankind, and that the only means to prevent them from germinating, was prayer, a diffidence in her own strength, and reliance upon God; the avoiding every opportunity of evil, keeping a vigilant guard over her appetites, and placing great confidence in good advice: she then assured her, if she followed all this, pleasure

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sure might assail, but it would not be able to seduce her affections.

In her reading, as she knew she would never apply much, she directed her to begin with what was most pleasing, and to ascend gradually from pleasure to utility. Lady Filmer also, told her, that it was proper she should make herself perfect mistress of the four principal rules of arithmetic; and that she looked upon it as absolutely necessary, she should learn to spell her own language accurately: at the same time she did not altogether expect this, as in that case Lady Sophia must have understood the derivation, as well as the tense of the words she used, if she stopt not at sound. She told her that she proposed taking her to all public places, except the drawing-room, which must be delayed until her brother's arrival: that she was far from wishing to debar her
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from amusements; she only wished to have that medium observed, which preserves to the sex their dignity, without abridging them of their due entertainment. Diversions, when properly regulated, are highly necessary; and never hurtful, but when taken to excess, that is to say, when they engross the whole thoughts. Balsac, speaking of those who are enemies to amusements, says, “ Had these people the government of the world, they would deprive the year of spring, and life of youth.”

But to know how to employ our leisure hours, is necessary at every age of life: in youth it is a preservative; in age it is a resource; and it is oeconomical at all times. Dionysius being asked by one, who desired to speak with him, if he were at leisure? made answer, “ Heavens forbid that I should ever be so unfortunate-

fortunate." As to dress, she told Lady Sophia, that those who are endowed with the gifts of nature, as to exterior beauty, as she was, are obliged to preserve, and display them, both to do honour to nature's munificence, and also that they may not deprive themselves of the advantages which they may procure them. "Wear then, my dear, said she, whatever may set off your agreeable figure to most advantage, only carefully avoid every thing that has the appearance of affectation. Extreme finery I cannot myself admire ; it is only for ideots not to abstract the person from the dress. With men of taste, beauty in the simplest garb, will be beauty ; and deformity, deformity ; though caparisoned like the Mogul's elephant, with rubies and diamonds.

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It was a maxim of Lady Filmer's, never to disguise from young women, that they were handsome, for she said they would soon be told so by the men; and by being prepared for this compliment, they will receive it with indifference, as words of course, instead of becoming a prey to the first coxcomb they meet: She (said Lady Filmer), who is puffed up by the praises of men, on the supposed advantages of person, assists their designs upon her, and seems to own that she thinks it a principal end of her being, to be admired by them: and what can give *more* importance to them, and *less* to herself, than this?—Those who require nothing more than beauty, must have been greatly charmed with Lady Sophia: but to those who investigate a little further, her conversation was trifling, and her conduct unfeeling: she attracted hundreds

dreds by the allurments of her person, but before any of those whom she attracted had been an hour in her company, she repelled them so effectually, that they were ever after proof against her magnetic powers. Mrs. Ross assisted this amiable woman in her endeavours to cultivate this young Lady's mind. As she will make a considerable figure in the continuation of the *family narrative*, I shall in this place give you her history.

Mrs. Ross had seen a great deal of the world; her adventures my pen cannot do justice to; they are of an interesting nature, some of them are pathetic; *all*, are full of that agonizing knowledge, which is usually purchased at the price of a broken heart. She had been extremely handsome, was at this time past forty; but there was still a placidness in her looks, a mild serenity, which

which at once created respect and admiration. It is merely a kind disposition of Providence, that adversity, so painful in itself, should conduce so peculiarly as it does, to the improvement of the human heart: it teaches modesty, humility, and compassion. “Adversity, says Plutarch, sets greatness of soul in a just light.” It is in the extremes of fortune that men appear what they really are, and not in the tranquil course of common life. Her husband had been a man of an enterprising genius, but of good sense: he entered into great expences for the discovery of coal, which he was flattered was on his estate: these hopes insensibly engaged him more and more, expecting every day to be rewarded for his labours. In the mean time, the gentlemen in his neighbourhood having been great votaries to Bacchus,

thus, inlisted him under their banners; and, his constitution being weak, he fell a sacrifice to his complaisance.

Men of strong health, and of a riotous turn, should not, in mere *compassion*, seduce into their company men of feeble constitutions, and make them companions of their riots, to the destruction of their health. And the same observation may be made in regard to extravagant men, of great and small fortunes, who are equally ill-suited, since the expences which will but shake the one, will quite demolish the other.

After the death of Mr. Ross, the estate was seized by his next neighbour, and greatest creditor; sold for little more than discharged his debts, leaving his widow and son only one thousand five hundred pounds. To complete Mrs. Ross's chagrin, the purchaser of the estate found the coal, before he had been
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in possession a fortnight. Although this afforded a proof to the relations of the family, that it had not been a chimerical scheme, upon which Mr. Ross had expended his fortune, yet his memory was slighted; his son neglected, and his widow treated as a ridiculous enterprising woman, &c.—In this age, there is hardly a vice which riches will not dignify, or a virtue which poverty will not disgrace.

The errors of the happy and successful may be forgiven, those of the unfortunate never are. No sex, no station, is exempted from the busy lash of tongues : whatever a man does, whatever he leaves undone, afford them matter to work upon. The best motives may be mistaken, or misrepresented : the most disinterested actions blamed and ridiculed. It is well that the happiness

of mankind depends more upon the temper of their own minds, than upon the opinion of others. If we pretend, in all cases, to assign motives for the conduct of other people, we shall be frequently mistaken. If we attribute success in the world, in all, or even most cases, to uncommon merit, we shall contradict experience. The well-concerted project of a sensible man, must often depend for success upon the will of a fool. Mrs. Ross soon found herself flighted and contemned by her great relations; they first insulted her with their pity, and then increased her fears, by magnifying the horrors of her situation, and their incapacity of relieving her. Evils cannot happen to wise and virtuous men; or if they do happen to them, cannot render them miserable. Stones are hard, and cakes of ice are cold;

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cold; and all who feel them, feel them alike: but the good or bad events which fortune brings upon us, are felt according to what qualities *we*, not *they*, have. They are in themselves indifferent and common accidents, and they acquire strength by nothing but our vice, or our weakness. Fortune can dispense neither felicity or infelicity, unless we co-operate with her. Few men who are unhappy under the loss of an estate, would be happy in the possession of it. Mrs. Rofs supported herself under these severe afflictions, with the greatest magnanimity: she still supposed, that her relations could not refuse her upon loan five hundred pounds, to recover an estate her son was intitled to; and which sum, upon the best advice, she was willing to risk; but could not raise it herself until her son was of age, although she could give am-

ple security for it. This small favour was denied her by a sister married to Lord O——; she afterwards applied to Sir Benjamin Ross, her brother-in-law, and met with no better success. He wisely shaking his head, said, “What purpose could it serve, to put money in the hands of those, who when they have it, are never at rest till they have schemed it away. *Simply to be poor*, says my favourite Greek historian, was not held scandalous by the wise Athenians; but highly so, to owe that poverty to our own indiscretion:” that he had already seen the inefficacy of her projects, and her late husband’s; and was sorry to add, that every one must be sensible they had played at *ducks and drakes* with their money.

A much smaller indignity was sufficient to awaken a generous mind to a sense

sense of its independence. Mrs. Ross acquainted Sir Benjamin, that she had done justice to her son by trying every means of serving him; that she had not come there to ask charity of him, far less to hear his deceased brother's memory traduced; that she had put it in his power to serve the only child of a brother who had never offended him; and that by the favour she had asked he would have run no risk. This she pronounced with great spirit: as some poisonous animals carry about ~~them~~ an antidote to their own venom, so do most people for the offence they give, by slight, hatred, or contempt. She was leaving the room when Sir Benjamin stopped her, saying, "If a trifling sum can be of any use to you it shall be at your service." To this

generous offer Mrs. Ross made no reply, but *with a look*; the meaning of which was lost on this *event-judging fool*. This look expressed—*I will not be obliged!* it marked the distinction between sensibility of misfortune, and weakness of mind: it repressed the influence of wealth, and conferred dignity even on indigence. There is, perhaps, some ingenuity in serving people, or lending money with a bad grace. We may possibly weaken the sense of gratitude in the debtors, but then we make them extremely eager to return the obligation, and get out of our debt. Mrs. Ross made some other unsuccessful attempts, to serve her son.

Friendship is so little to be depended on, that the surest way to preserve one's *friends*, is never to put them to any trial.

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Indeed some of the younger part of her acquaintances at this time contributed to her satisfaction, as far as their civilities could extend : but it was with an ardour, which those that know the human heart, must be sensible could not last long. All that is more than necessary, is too much : her ease, her happiness, her welfare, was their only concern, they would go no where until they knew she was fixed for the day, &c. But every thing wears out, and the excess of their fine sentiments soon destroyed themselves : when her misfortunes grew familiar, they ceased to strike their imaginations : an habit of seeing her, dissipated the caprice which had been so beneficial to her, and satiated the satisfaction they had in serving her ; they gradually declined in their visits and atten-

tions, and at last wholly gave her up, from shame for the part they had acted, which brought them in discredit with themselves. Mrs. Ross had been much attached to her husband: his temper had rendered him disagreeable for a few years past, but this she imputed to the bad success of his schemes, which had also led him into a love of his bottle. When we really love a person, we are apt to find excuses for their faults: but when they are lost to us, we wonder at ourselves for ever having been offended. Women are fond of indulging their griefs: the men endeavour to dissipate theirs, and easily succeed.

As soon as Mrs. Ross had reason to conclude that she had buried every friend with her husband, or that they had been annexed to the deeds of the
estate

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estate she had been obliged to sell, to prevent prescription, she had her son returned heir to his father; and, upon that *retour*, applied for a charter, in order to keep open his claim on the other estate, as it was not in her power to go to law. After which she would instantly have left Edinburgh; being greatly disgusted with her relation; but her son being at the university there, she would not withdraw him from it, and could not afford to board him elsewhere. This obstacle was soon removed; her son disappeared, and wrote her a letter, that he had left her from knowing the difficulty of her situation, &c. and he reproached himself for having been so long a burthen to her; that nothing should ever efface from his soul, the virtuous impressions she had given him; and he despaired not of success in the world;

world; for that as it was his strongest desire, so his every endeavour should be exerted to snatch from indigence a respectable parent, and to place her in a situation worthy of her. I will not pretend to describe Mrs. Ross's feelings, or the emotions of her mind in reading this letter; they only who are mothers, can perhaps judge of them. She had kept up a constant correspondence with Lady Filmer, and immediately wrote to her a succinct account of her situation; expressing a desire that she might board in some sober family in her neighbourhood. The first natural impulse of a distressed heart, often points the best alleviation: she had an answer from Lady Filmer, by return of the post, insisting on her instantly leaving a place where she had been treated unworthily, and coming to her. This kind invitation she immediately

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mediately accepted; and was met at London, by Lady Filmer, who carried her to Filmer-Place. Mrs. Rofs, in the beginning of this narrative, had been with Lady Filmer five years, without having heard any thing of her son: she had accepted of Lady Filmer's invitation, of constant residence with her, as she knew it was sincere; and that she was governed in her actions by such immutable principles, as made her not likely to change her sentiments, and was one of these fine dispositions, that is formed to draw its happiness from every object around it: her noble, and sublime self-love, relished nothing with more satisfaction, than the being useful to her friends; and any person's boldness in requiring her services a second time, rewarded her first kindness. As a generous mind delights in conferring
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favours, so an ingenuous and grateful heart is superior to false shame in accepting them.

Mrs. Ross, however, felt great uneasiness on her son's account: "The world (as Milton phrases it) *lay all before him*;" and he, no more than Adam, had any man (that she knew of) to whom he might resort for comfort or assistance. But Lady Filmer consoled her, by drawing her mind to such objects as alone could secure to her satisfaction. "Could you, my dear Mrs. Ross, said she, flatter yourself with the hopes of finding this world the place of your repose? awake from your error! the happiest of mortals, is he who has the fewest miseries, at least in human consideration; religion, indeed, when it is truly prevalent, may have power to dissipate every cloud. What can befall

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us which is not foreseen, ordained, directed, by a wise and merciful Providence? This, when you recollect, will be the origin of your peace, which will never be disturbed, but when you shall seek for consolation, and a remedy, in philosophy or human reason. There is nothing on earth, but the loss of virtue, which may *not* be lamented too much. Friendship, love, and duty, have their bounds, and of consequence, the sorrow which is occasioned by each, should be limited.

With this excellent advice from Lady Filmer to Mrs. Ross, I conclude my letter. I ever am, dear Madam,

most affectionately yours,

ELIZA DE CRUI.

L E T T E R X I I .

From the Same, to the Same.

DEAR MADAM,

AS in my last, I acquainted you with the plan Lady Filmer adopted with Lady Sophia, I shall here acquaint you with that which she followed in the education of Lady Harriet. She had received all the instructions of a boarding-school in common with her sister; exclusive of which, Lady Filmer either personally or by letters, had instructed her in the sciences. She first explained to her chronology, and its technical terms; she then wrote a short abstract of the Jewish History, from the creation of the world,

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world, to the destruction of Jerusalem : and then an account of the four ancient monarchies, from their origin, to the division of the Roman Empire ; and so on to the translation of the Imperial seat to Constantinople : to this, she added a short account of the other Aborigines of the earth, such as the Celtes, Scythians, Chinese, Egyptians, Phœnicians, Charthaginians, Teutonics, and other nations of whom any account has been handed down to us. She also wrote a short sketch of the middle ages under the Eastern and Western empires ; together with a history of the Caliphs, Saracens, and Mahometans, and their irruptions, &c. from the reign of Constantine to the restoration of the Western Empire, by Charles the Great ; and proceeded to the extinction of that family. She then gave her an account of the present
state

state of the empires, kingdoms, and republics of the earth, and of all the alterations they have undergone: and afterwards instructed her by the same means, in the history of the Germanic Empire: of Ecclesiastical history, &c. She divided the History of England into four periods, very different with regard to their duration, but almost of equal importance. The first, is from the earliest accounts of the country, to its conquest by the Saxons; the second, from that æra to that of the Norman Conquerors; the third, from thence to the alteration of the constitution by the beheading of King Charles II. the last contains those transactions which have passed since that time. “To consider the first with accuracy, she told her, belongs to the philosopher: the second and the third are more immediately the business of those

those who would understand the grounds of our constitution, which is the proper business of a legislator : the last, of such as would be acquainted with the connections and relations in which we stand with regard to our neighbours on the continent ; and our foreign and domestic trade : that is, in other words, of the politician and the merchant. She likewise informed Lady Harriet, how the power of England and France had been changed in a few centuries : that they had been then very different from what they are at present, as the French monarchs, under the reign of Hugh Capet, in 987, had but an inconsiderable tract of territory ; the greatest part of the kingdom being enjoyed by independent princes, whose possessions were gradually united to the crown. And though Henry II. con-

V O L . I . N quered

quered Ireland, Wales was not united to England till the reign of Edward I. nor was Scotland till that of James I. So that both kingdoms are (said to be) more powerful than ever *. The history of Scotland she also divided into four periods; the first reaching from the origin of the monarchy to the reign of Kenneth II. the second from Kenneth's conquest of the Picts, to the death of Alexander III. the third extends to the death of James V. the last from thence to the accession of James VI. to the crown of England. The first period is the reign of pure fable and conjecture. Truth dawns in the second, but still merits no particular or laborious enquiry. In the third period, the history of Scotland becomes more authentic: not

* This sentiment, however, is very justly disputed.

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only are events related, but their courses and effects explained; the characters of the actors are displayed; the manners of the age described; the revolutions in the constitution pointed out: and here every Scotsman should begin to study the history of his own country. During the fourth period, the affairs of Scotland were so mingled with those of other nations, its situation in the political state of Europe was so important, its influence on the operations of the neighbouring kingdoms was so visible, that its history becomes an object of attention to foreigners; and, without some knowledge of the various and extraordinary revolutions which happened there, they cannot form a just notion either of the most illustrious events, or of the characters of the most distinguished personages in the sixteenth century. The his-

tory of Ireland she divided into three parts: the first begins with the establishment of the Scoto-Milesians in that kingdom, and extends to the fifth century, when the Irish first began to renounce the pagan idolatry; the second begins at the rise of christianity, and comprehends seven centuries, ending about the year 1200: the third contains the more circumstantial relations of the different irruptions of the English, their establishment on that island, and, in short, all the remarkable transactions that have happened, down to these times. Lady Filmer had taught Lady Harriet, the principles of geography, and the use of the different sorts of maps and charts, ancient and modern: she instructed her likewise in genealogy, in rhetoric: she pointed out to her the method of obtaining a correct

rect style, but more particularly in the composing of English, French, and Italian letters. Words, she instructed her, ought to be placed in such a manner, as not to shock the ear with jarring sounds; that she must be upon her guard against monosyllables; must observe a reasonable limit in her periods, never exceeding the usual power of the breath, to utter with ease; which may be about six of our heroic verses: that she must seldom let two, never three, of this extent succeed each other: that she must avoid no less the contrary extreme, of short sentences, which are unmusical, harsh, and abrupt; and cautioned her not to string many of these together; for that discourse, or writing, is most agreeable to the ear, when long and short sentences are properly intermixed. She recommended particularly to Lady Har-

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riect, the Etymological Dictionary of Monsieur Menage, as necessary for understanding the words and orthography of the French language. It were to be wished, that there were dictionaries of this sort compiled for the different idioms of countries. It was probably with this view, a very ingenious author compiled a dictionary, without which it is impossible to unravel the beauties of his own works: which would otherwise have remained (to the loss of mankind) *torpid, frozen, and congealed.*

In the hours of relaxation, Lady Filmer made Lady Harriet read some of the best poets and orators, ancient and modern, to improve her taste: she also informed her of the nature of antiquities, medals, and other ornamental parts of learning, at least so far,
that

that she might not be ignorant of them : and purchased for her Mr. Jennings's Introduction to the Knowledge of Medals, which is reckoned a sensible and judicious treatise ; in which the elements of medallic knowledge are laid down without affectation, or any useless display of erudition : it contains the history of medals ; their matter, size, and shape ; the orders into which they are distinguished ; their impression and form, and their values and use. The Tyro in antiquities may here find a valuable introduction to that province of knowledge which relates to medals and coins ; and the profound antiquary may learn to be more sparing of conjecture, and to form his conjectures upon the principles of reason and common sense. Lady Filmer also used to amuse Lady Harriet with Dr. Stukely's Medal-

lic History of Craſius, emperor in Britain: the events in the ſeven years reign of Carauſius, are there deduced from three hundred and ten coins of this emperor, in which is delineated their religious ceremonies, &c. He lays it down as a maxim, that every legend of a medal alluded to religion, ſacrifices, public ſpectacles, ſacred tranſactions, deities, the animals uſed for offerings; and all thoſe things are well illuſtrated in the Roman kalendar annexed, which he is ſaid to have much improved, by adding the days of triumph, and other particulars. “A cabinet of medals, Lady Filmer told her, is a body of hiſtory, as confirming ſuch paſſages as are true in old authors, in ſettling ſuch as are told after different manners, and in reading ſuch as have been omitted: they are alſo a great help to chronology, as they do
not

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not only show the actions of the emperor, but at the same time, mark out the year in which they were performed. "But every thing, my dear child, said she, in its excess is ridiculous : I would not, observes an elegant writer, be better acquainted with the faces of the Antonines, than with those of our own kings; and I would prefer my money in pounds sterling, to a sum in sesterces. But to possess a sentimental facility of being moved by what is excellent in any art, and to be able to signify it to others, will surely add to the other graces an amiable woman may have.

'Tis chiefly taste, or blunt, or gross, or fine,
Makes life insipid, beastial, or divine:
Better be born with taste to little rent,
Than the dull monarch of a continent.

ARMSTRONG.

She

She who enjoys a fine taste, and cultivates a competent knowledge of the polite arts, may be said to possess another sense, and will therefore add to her own happiness; while it marks to others a superior education, an enlightened mind, and exquisite feelings. If a woman should not even have taste, as taste is the gift of Heaven, it will by no means excuse her ignorance. Want of information proceeds from indolence and a vulgar mind *. As much of life must be passed in affairs considerable only by their frequent occurrences, and much of the pleasure our condition allows must be produced by giving elegance to trifles,

* Barnaroti, wrote a series of comedies called *La Fiera*, or the Fair, by which he supplied the Academicians della Crusca with the terms of arts and manufactures. It may be necessary to know these, though we should be sparing in the use of them.

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it is necessary for us to acquire such accomplishments as are proper, in the intercourse of society, to render us interesting or pleasing companions. It is thought the Bona Dei of the Romans was nothing more than the goddess of Taste. Ladies alone were admitted into her mysteries: the natural indelicacy of the stronger sex seems to countenance this opinion. Women in general are allowed to have much stronger, and more exquisite sensations than men: and a frequent intercourse with the female sex, and a thorough acquaintance with their charms and virtues, are essential requisites to form a man of taste. A sensible woman, continued Lady Filmer, who has a taste in the sciences, will join such a happy propriety in the use of them, as will be sufficient to excite the admiration of others, even while she discreetly covers
her

her knowledge with a gentle veil: and while she is adorned with all the graces of her sex, and can think deeply, *she will assume nothing*, having always a facility of temper, a presence of mind, and an ease of manner, which will make her deepest reasoning appear to be the result of nature. Let us, my dear child, said she, resign the mystery of technical terms to the men, by which their ignorance is sometimes disguised, and their knowledge frequently disgraced. There cannot be a greater abuse of language, than to make use of words to which we have no fixed, no determinate ideas. I make it a rule never to give my assent or negative to a proposition, till I am acquainted with the terms of it. To simplify expression, is always the effect of the deepest knowledge, and clearest discernment. Let us also avoid
all

all kinds of affectation; when once people quit the direction of nature, they know not where to stop, and continually expose themselves by the most absurd extremes. This arises from an ill-governed consciousness, which when we see creep into worthy minds, we sincerely lament. And it is to be regretted, that the ambition of having superior sensibility and parts, disposes the affected lovers of arts to receive rapture at one time, and communicate it at another. They first impose upon themselves, and then on others.

A person of real taste possesses all his senses in the manner best adopted to receive the impression of every true pleasure, which Providence has scattered with a liberal hand for the delight of his creatures. There is nothing intrinsically beautiful, that does not furnish him
with

with a perpetual delight: in a word, the avenues of his mind are open to all those enjoyments that bring with them the passports of reason. It is therefore to be lamented, that among those, to whom an easy fortune give sufficient leisure and opportunities for the improvement of taste, people of both sexes give so little attention to it, and consequently can find little amusement in it. Nature gives only the seeds of taste, culture must rear them, or they will never become a source of pleasure. When objects of any kind are first presented to the eye, or imagination, the sentiment Mr. Hume, says, which attends them, is obscure and confused: and the mind is, in a great measure, incapable of pronouncing concerning their merits or defects. But allow him to acquire experience in these objects, his feelings
be-

become more exact and nice; he not only perceives the beauties and defects of each part, but marks the distinguishing species of each quality, and assigns its suitable praise or blame. To be continually advancing in the paths of knowledge is one of the most pleasing satisfactions of the human mind.

Lady Filmer, also, adopted a particular method with Lady Harriet, which contributed much to her improvement. She used frequently to say, discoursing is like *transplanting a tree*, the success of which is precarious: but adages, resemble the *sowing a seed*, which strikes a surer and deeper root. In Lady Filmer's absence, Lady Harriet wrote to her twice a week, on these subjects; by which she received a double advantage: it accustomed her to express her thoughts with propriety; and by inquiring into
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the foundation of these maxims, whether it was reason or example, she discovered a great number of arguments, which induced her to follow that which is good, and to avoid that which is evil: and these arguments being the result of her own reflections, made the strongest impression on her mind, as she was convinced of the justness and truth of them. Lectures on morality, by the instructors of youth, are frequently regarded as part of their duty; therefore make a weaker impression on their minds, than those which are the consequences of their own inquiry.

I am, my dear Mrs. Pierpont,

most affectionately

and truly yours,

ELIZA DE CREIL.

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L E T T E R XIII.

From Mrs. PIERPONT to the Duchess
DE CRUI.

DEAR MADAM,

Liege.

I Return your Highness many thanks
for the honour you have done me:
your confidence gives me importance
with myself. I was much entertained
with Lady Filmer's letters, and also
with your Highness's account of the
different methods she pursued with the
ladies F—— : she appears to me to be
a woman of extraordinary talents, and
also very deserving of the high place she
possesses in your esteem. The examples
she produces of feminine excellence are,

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to

to be sure, very splendid, and I make no doubt of our capacities extending to any thing we are brought up for; but as in this happy period, we are protected and defended from invading enemies, we should cultivate those talents more natural to the sex.

* Every thing to me, loses its charms, when it is put out of that station wherein nature, or, to speak more properly, the all-wise Creator, has placed it. A Plato in petticoats, or a Camilla in the field, are equally my aversion. Is it not inverting the order of nature; an actual rebellion against Heaven? In this town, the husband is Hercules with the distaff, the wife Omphale with the lion's skin. I remember a Spanish poet * says on this subject,

* Lopez de Vega.

If he who conquer'd lions,
Is by a woman conquer'd,
What shame for him to be so weak,
For her to be so fierce.

Aristotle, in his Politics, says, " The modesty and fortitude of men, differ from these virtues in women; for the fortitude which becomes a woman, would be cowardice in a man; and the modesty which becomes a man, would be pertness in a woman." The fable of the North-wind and the Sun contending to make the man throw off his cloak, affords an apt illustration of the powers of either sex: the blustering fierceness of the former, instead of producing the effect which it expected, made the man but wrap himself up the closer; yet no sooner did the sun-beams play, than that which before protected him, became an

incumbrance. Mr. Pierpont used often to amuse himself by depreciating the character of women. Lord Chester, (but why do I mention him?) frequently answered him to this effect; "If we consider women in the light of our dearest friends, are we not to protect, honour, and care for them, with the utmost love and tenderness? but, if we regard them as enemies, they are a conquest of which a man ought to be ashamed."

I look upon sensibility of heart, sweetness of temper, and gentleness of manners, to be the most distinguishing characteristic in our sex: if we avail ourselves of these, we shall be more powerful than if we possessed the strength of Hercules, and the oratory of Demosthenes. Lady Filmer says, "That had women been employed in state affairs in Great
Bri-

Britain, it might have been lucky for the nation in some particulars." I cannot help, in some measure, subscribing to her ladyship's opinion; for if women had been employed in the capacity of the Chinese Thinkers, we perhaps might never have been brought to such extremities in America, nor would so many brave men have fallen there in consequence of our misconduct at home. I am a very bad politician, but as we have agreed between us to write to one another without reserve, to hazard every thing; I shall freely give you my opinion: perhaps you may say to me sometimes what an ingenious Frenchman said in a letter to a friend, "There is something in your letter, I believe, would be very fine, if you and I understood it. Il y a dans votre lettre une chose qui seroit, je crois fort belles, si vous l'entendions vous et moy."—But I

proceed—The ministry, of late years, do not seem to have been possessed of general ideas, or universal principles, and have acted in consequence of the most immediate, and familiar associations. They indeed, at least some of them, have had their own points in view, and have attended to them with the utmost diligence, and acted such a part as is agreeable to that patriotism they have vowed to themselves, which is built on self-interest, and cemented by dissimulation. When this is the case, it naturally prevents their ideas from being complex. And this may account for their not having acquired a habit of comparing rapidly a number of objects together, and of forming a conclusion; by which means the action in consequence becomes less dangerous and uncertain.

Errors

Errors accumulated through many centuries, have never yet been exposed by ascending to general principles, nor has the force of acknowledged truths been ever opposed to the unbounded licentiousness of ill-directed power, which has so continually produced so many authorized examples of the most unfeeling barbarity. Such was the extirpation of the poor Caribbees, an innocent and unoffending race; living in a state of nature, hitherto unmolested, and unconscious of offence, never dreaming of impending woe. Their rights of inheritance had never been called in question: but had there been a surmise of that nature, every treaty of peace in which they were included was a new grant to them: and a security on the faith of Great Britain. It has been urged they are a brutal, stupid people, addicted to all man-

ner of vices : can we expect any thing else from a nation deprived of the Gospel ! Let us bewail, but not reproach them for their misfortune ; let us instruct them, and remove their errors, and not be so wicked as to reduce them to despair.

Each case is ours : and for the human mind
'Tis monstrous not to feel for all mankind.

ARMSTRONG.

In this manner, I am very apt to believe, women would have acted if they had been at the helm of affairs ; humanity belongs to the sex. An instance of this may be produced, by observing that in Russia during the reign of the late Empress Elizabeth, and the present Empress Catherine, no malefactor has been put to death. And it is more than probable, from the quickness of their genius,

nus, they would have penetrated into the fordid selfish views of those, who (for their own emolument) by their fallacious representations, induced the ministry (even in this age of oeconomy) to expend thirty thousand pounds on this expedition, exclusive of the continued expence of keeping troops there. So far I agree with Lady Filmer; but her Ladyship says, * “ that the organs in women are of a finer texture than in men.” Might not this observation be made an argument for the contrary opinion of what she advances? Since the organs of the female sex are of a finer texture, and more exquisitely formed, than those in men; and since, as she has with great propriety observed, the soul is influenced in all her operations by the organisation of the body, will it not hence

* See Page 78.

follow, that there must be some difference in the operations of the soul, and that women may have a higher degree of sensibility, more delicate feelings, more lively passions, and be more competent judges in matters of decorum and taste, which is, as Dr. Akenfide finely expresses it,

——— feelingly alive

To each fine impulse, a discerning sense
Of decent and sublime, with quick disgust
From things deform'd, or disarrang'd, as gross
In species. ———

Will it not follow, that women, from the nicer construction of their organs, may thus be better judges of propriety, politeness, elegance, and taste, but may be less qualified for arduous undertakings, intricate and abstract reasonings, and the higher and more difficult departments of knowledge and science?

Does

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Does not fact and experience favour this conjecture?

I observe Lady Filmer has fallen into the vulgar error, of supposing the Turks deny we have any souls. An ingenious lady † has since informed us, that it is true they say women are not of so elevated a being as men, and therefore must not hope to be admitted into the paradise appointed for the men, who are to be entertained with celestial beauties: but there is a place of happiness destined for souls of an inferior order, where all good women will be rewarded with eternal bliss!

I cannot see myself, the necessity for our sex being philosophers, rhetoricians, historians, or poets. Our lives are too short for every attainment: if ignorance is despicable, a superfluity of false sci-

† Lady Mary W. Montague.

ence,

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ence, is a thousand times worse, and often renders a woman contemptible and ridiculous. It is certainly necessary to be well informed in the principles of our religion, and to do our duty we must know it, but further is unnecessary. We please ourselves in knowledge, but we please God by obeying his commandments, and in our humble acts of piety. Religion is nothing else, but the knowledge of the most excellent truths, the contemplation of the most glorious objects, and the hope of a blessed immortality; it requires nothing but the practice of such duties as are most conducive to our happiness, peace, health, honour, prosperity, and eternal welfare.

“ If man, says Epictetus, had any sentiments of honour and gratitude, all that he sees is nature, all that he experiences

fiences in himself, would be to him a continual subject of gratitude, praise, and thanksgiving."

If women's situation is more confined, is it not of infinite advantage to them; does it not furnish them with more time to prepare themselves for everlasting happiness, which, it is to be much feared, the business of the world prevents the men from attending to; and if the best of our services are imperfect, how much are they to be lamented?

Look down, great God, with pity's softest eye,
On a poor breathing particle of dust,
His crimes forgive; forgive his virtues too,
Those smaller faults, *half converts* to the right.

Night Thoughts.

Though Solomon's description of a wife and good woman may be despised by this refined generation, yet certain it is,

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is, that the business of a family is the most profitable and honourable study a woman can employ herself in : this employing a great part of her time, will prevent her feeling that *ennui* attending fine ladies, and she will have no time for complaint. The ordinary troubles of life, which to those who have nothing else to think of are insupportable, will be to her less terrible than to people more engrossed by dissipation, or those of easier circumstances ; for it is a certain truth, when the mind is divided among many cares, the anxiety is lighter than where there is only one to be contended with. I am by no means, at the same time, against women's informing themselves in every art or science, if it does not interfere with their more important concerns ; and am of opinion, that by keeping company with intelligent men, our sex may gain
some-

something, which, embellished with elegance, and softened by modesty, will always add dignity and value to female conversation—But surely it would be folly to labour to gain, what if gained would be useless, or to waste exertion upon objects unworthy of our notice, or that have been left unattained from their futility.

A great law-giver being asked what he thought most proper for boys to learn? answered, “What they ought to do when they are men.”

A man once gave a public specimen of his dexterity, by driving a carriage along straight lines, to the astonishment of the beholders: but Plato shook his head. “This man, said he, can have done nothing useful, who has spent so much time upon trifles.” Another shewed his dexterity of hand before Alexander the
Great,

Great, by throwing pease through the eye of a bodkin, without missing once. — Alexander ordered him a present of pease. Whoever attempts to acquire reputation by talents useless to society, becomes justly the object of their contempt. I am sure your Highness will agree with me in thinking Socrates had great merit in withdrawing the wits of Greece, by his instructions and example, from the vain pursuits of philosophy, to moral inquiries; and turning their thoughts from such studies as were useless to society, to the various modes of virtue and relations of life.

To Mr. Locke, also, have we not great obligations? He lived in an age when learning made a surprising progress in every part of Europe: instead of attempting to improve natural and experimental philosophy, subjects on which some

of

of the greatest men the world ever produced, were then engaged, he left them to investigate the laws of the natural world, and undertook a new branch of science. He made the mind of man his study, developed its faculties, traced the manner of their operations, and delivered more profound truths relating to the intellectual powers, and the conduct of the understanding in the acquisition of knowledge, than are to be met with in all the volumes of antiquity. When I observe, that during the age of the greatest activity, young men are confined to studies, which are merely speculative; and that they are afterwards suddenly pushed into the world without the least experience; I find it to be a practice, contrary both to reason and nature, and am no longer surpris'd so few

men are capable of conducting themselves with dignity and propriety through life.—I have always thought our sex had a great superiority in this respect. We are taught by experience, what they learn but imperfectly from *books*. Moral truths are as certain as mathematical. It is as certain that good is not evil, nor evil good, as that a part is less than the whole, or that a circle is not a triangle. Can any thing be more unaccountable, than to spend so much time in teaching them things which are quite useless, whilst the great art of accommodating themselves to their situation, is quite neglected! Under a pretence of forming them for society, they are instructed as if each individual were destined to spend his whole life in chimerical speculations: and for this reason, from sixteen to twenty-four, I believe
that

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that women are generally more than two years before the men in ripeness of understanding.—I am greatly obliged to the Duke for his advice concerning my affairs. I shall now give your Highness an exact account of my situation, by which you will see the inefficacy of any steps I could take in that affair.

You know I had the misfortune to be married at fourteen to Mr. Pierpont: my sufferings with him, for fifteen years, were greater than I ever communicated to your Highness. I concealed his faults, lest they should harden him against that sense of shame, which I flattered myself might one day be the means of reclaiming him.

The last years of his life, I was compelled to debar myself the maternal joy of my children's presence; as the

manner in which he treated me before them, was such, as must have deprived me of their respect. And your Highness knows, that parents, in order to preserve their children's veneration for them, should be very careful not to let them see, or suspect any thing in their own conduct, behaviour, or principles, which they would not approve of in others. The profane manner in which Mr. Pierpont treated all serious subjects, must inevitably have eradicated in them every principle of virtue.

To commit unjustifiable actions under the influence of ungovernable passions, while at the same time we disapprove of them, is human frailty : but to establish principles for the vindication of vice ; and to inculcate them, is such an infernal effort, as must excite the greatest indigna-

dignation in every good and virtuous mind. But his unhappy course is run, and for the first time in my life, in obedience to your Highness's commands, I *paint* what I suffered in my connection with him. Sir Timothy Upton, from whom he possessed the estate of Mount Mirtle, in Shropshire, left it him under this condition, that if he, or any of his successors, died intestate, it was to devolve to the London Hospital. To that Hospital it must go; for no solicitations on my part could induce him to make a will. His common answer to my entreaties, would offend your ears; let it suffice, he insinuated I wanted him to execute this deed, that I might afterwards poison him, and marry Lord Chester. In consequence of this omission, as his own private affairs had been

greatly involved, before his accession to this estate, I find myself at this time, instead of seven thousand, only in possession of three hundred pounds a year, to support my son, my daughter, and myself. But I shall bring up my children to a humble fortune, and they will be contented with it : I accustom them in their dress to a plain and practicable neatness, and show them the best way of making and contriving their dress ; and also to despise what many others think necessary. And I have, above all things, instructed them, that it is a sign of a mean and low genius, to be uneasy because they cannot have such a gown, or such a cap : that a just understanding always rejects excessive delicacy ; it treats little matters as little, and is not at all hurt by them : none deserve happiness,

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ness, or indeed, are capable of it, who make any particular station a necessary ingredient. Your Highness may recollect in what dangerous situations Mr. Pierpont used to place me with the very man, to whom he suspected I was partial. A virtuous mind may be *surprised* without being subdued — I struggled against my heart, I conquered and am happy. Every thing we ought to do, I firmly believe, we shall be enabled to do, if we set about it properly, and with equal humility and trust in God. I am convinced that even a well-founded affection is surmountable, when we have not given it improper encouragement, and when the struggles we make against it are supported by motives of duty.

My husband's conduct exposed me to censure: but a censured person should

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first seek to be justified to herself, and give but a second place to the world's opinion of her; and in all cases where the two cannot be reconciled, to prefer the first to the last. If the reflections thrown upon her are just, she ought not only to forgive them, but endeavour to profit by them: if unjust, she ought to despise them, and the person who makes them, since it would be inexcusable to strengthen by anger an enemy, whose malice will be disarmed by contempt. As the world judged without knowing, it was unjust, without offending me—but difficult situations often make seeming occasions for censure unavoidable: which the candid will allow for.

It is the fate of unequal unions, that persons not naturally of bad dispositions,
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through them often incur censure; who, more happily yoked, would be entitled to praise. There are qualities, which are not quite unobserved in one situation, by the very people who would admire them in another, where certain advantageous circumstances serve as glasses to assist their sight.

At Spa, I contracted an intimate friendship with a young lady, who I afterwards saw at the English nunnery at this place: she made me acquainted with a nun, whose name is Christini, and is now lady abbess.—Were your Highness to see her, you would confess a nunnery was no confinement: few female figures have so much beauty, or as much grace: there is in her countenance an expression of sweetness, and good sense, which will hardly be equalled
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in thousands of her sex. But the beauties of the mind, which beamed forth in her face, the sweet serenity which enlivened the monastic air of seriousness, which was diffused over her fine features, entirely captivated my heart.

I found she was in the highest esteem: this determined me to leave my three girls under her care. After my husband's death, I have continued them there, from an oeconomical scheme, as I could not afford to have them so well educated at home. I have always thought, that the French ladies being brought up in convents, where books are the only refuge they have from silence and tediousness, is attended with the greatest advantages to them: and, as they have generally lively parts, they cannot fail to improve, by this
best

best of all methods; which is rendered more effectual by the time solitude affords them to reflect on what they read. It was an admirable reflection of Montesquieu's, " Il ne s'agit pas de faire lire, (says he) mais de faire penser." Do not suppose from this, I differ from my former sentiments with regard to the studies of the men; you may recollect how differently I painted what *is necessary* for us to acquire. The age young ladies are, when generally placed in convents, is after they have acquired a habit of reflection from being in company at home: having contracted ideas, they have now leisure to inquire into them, and to distinguish between true rectitude, and false principles, sanctified by fashion and folly. This will place them above that trifling

fling disposition, too common among young women; which makes even youth ridiculous, and maturity insignificant; but old age altogether contemptible. I apprehend, it is for this reason, that the French ladies (in regard to intellectual accomplishments) are much superior to others, who have not had the same advantages of education. The king of Prussia affords an instance in point: he was certainly born with more than common abilities; but that he has cultivated them with greater diligence, was probably the effect of his peculiar condition (his being so long confined in prison by his father) of that, which he then considered as cruelty and oppression.

You are perhaps, surprised that I should leave my daughters at a convent, lest they should imbibe prejudices in favour of
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of the Roman catholic religion: *our* charity is more extensive than *yours*: I do not apprehend my girls in any danger, as you would do yours at a protestant school. Pity it is, my dear friend, that different nations of the world, though of different persuasions, did not more than they do, consider themselves the creatures of one God, the Sovereign of a thousand worlds. Geographers dividing the world into thirty parts, give us this account of them, that but five of those thirty are christians; and, for the rest, six of them are Jews, and Mahometan; and the remaining nineteen heathen. Is not this a lesson to be upon our guard, in limiting the mercies of God? It is extremely useful to go abroad sometimes to wear off prejudices.

I know

I know your Highness will pardon the freedom with which I write: I shall make you no compliments. I desire you only to delineate in your rancy, the sincerest, and most ardent effusion of tenderness and friendship, and believe it springs from the heart of

Your Highness's

affectionate, obliged

humble servant,

ANNA PIERPONT.

N. B. My girls wait impatiently for your Highness's Family Narrative.—Do not think of answering my *bêtise*.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

